# HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART

*Painting* • *Sculpture* • *Architecture*

FREDERICK HARTT
DAVID G. WILKINS

SEVENTH EDITION

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## About the cover

Some of the most convincing portraitists—Raphael, Holbein, Poussin, Ingres—sharply separated this vein of their production from the idealism of their more formal work. Raphael, cool and detached by nature, seems especially interested in capturing the character of his sitter. Angelo Doni relaxes outdoors with one arm on a balustrade, the shaggy masses of his hair reflected in the trees at the lower right, the bulky shapes of his arms and hands in the low hills of the background. The wealthy wool merchant is impressive at thirty—cool, self-contained, firm.

To learn more about Raphael and Angelo Doni, turn to Chapter 16 "The Origins of the High Renaissance."

**Raphael.** *Angelo Doni.* c. 1506. Panel, 24½ × 17¼" (63 × 45 cm). Pitti Gallery, Florence.

*806 illustrations, with 677 in full color; 5 color maps*

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# About the authors

The late FREDERICK HARTT was one of the most distinguished art historians of the twentieth century. A student of Berenson, Schapiro, and Friedlaender, he taught for more than fifty years, influencing generations of Renaissance scholars. At the time of his death he was Paul Goodloe McIntire Professor Emeritus of the History of Art at the University of Virginia. He was a knight of the Crown of Italy, a Knight Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, an honorary citizen of Florence, and an honorary member of the Academy of the Arts of Design, Florence, a society whose charter members included Michelangelo and the Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. Professor Hartt authored, among other works, *Florentine Art under Fire* (1949); *Botticelli* (1952); *Giulio Romano* (1958); *Love in Baroque Art* (1964); *The Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal* (1964); three volumes on the painting, sculpture, and drawings of Michelangelo (1964, 1969, 1971); *Donatello, Prophet of Modern Vision* (1974); *Michelangelo's Three Pietàs* (1975); and the monumental *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*.

DAVID G.WILKINS is professor emeritus of the history of art and architecture at the University of Pittsburgh and former chair of the department. He also has served on the faculties of the University of Michigan in Florence, the Semester at Sea Program, and the Duquesne University Program in Rome. Professor Wilkins is the author of *Donatello* (1984, with Bonnie A. Bennett); *Maso di Banco: A Florentine Artist of the Early Trecento* (1985); The Illustrated Bartsch: "Pre-Rembrandt Etchers," vol. 53 (1985, with Kahren Arbitman); *A History of the Duquesne Club* (1989, with Mark Brown and Lu Donnelly); *The Art of the Duquesne Club* (2001); and *Art Past/Art Present* (sixth edition, 2007, with Bernard Schultz and Katheryn Linduff). He was co-editor of *The Search for a Patron in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (1996, with Rebecca Wilkins) and *Beyond Isabella: Secular Women Patrons of Art in Renaissance Italy* (2001, with Sheryl Reiss), and editor of *The Collins Big Book of Art* (2005) and *A Reflection of Faith: St. Paul Cathedral, Pittsburgh, 1906–2006* (2007). In 2005 he received the College Art Association's national award for the Distinguished Teaching of Art History.

CENTRAL

# About the book

*History of Italian Renaissance Art*, Seventh Edition, brings you an updated understanding of this pivotal period as it incorporates new research and current art historical thinking, while also maintaining the integrity of the story that Frederick Hartt first told so enthusiastically many years ago. Choosing to retain Frederick Hartt's traditional framework, David Wilkins' incisive revisions keep the book fresh and up-to-date.

Newly added works of art reflect our ever-expanding understanding of the diversity of the Renaissance period. These additions include more drawings and prints, as well as examples of porcelain, stained glass, and blown glass. The visual culture of the time also encompassed inexpensive, mass-produced devotional works, and a print known as the *Madonna del Fuoco* has been added as a rare surviving example of this type of work. Several more portraits and a new representation of the David and Goliath theme expand the exploration of iconographic themes. More color illustrations can be found throughout, with a special emphasis on showing architecture and architectural models in color. An updated bibliography provides a guide for further reading about artists and major topics.

David Wilkins brings a strong, contemporary sensibility to Italian Renaissance art, revising the text for greater clarity, but always with an eye to preserving the evocative and compelling voice of the book's original author.

"The *History of Italian Renaissance Art* just got even better! I like the organization and approach. It's both scholarly and accessible."
Sara N. James, Mary Baldwin College

"I've been using the book for forty years, from its first edition in 1969, since it was, and still is, the best available comprehensive overview of the major arts of the Italian Renaissance."
Robert Munman, University of Illinois at Chicago

"... consistently rich in its content, reliable in its information, and enjoyable for the enthusiasm and knowledge of its authors."
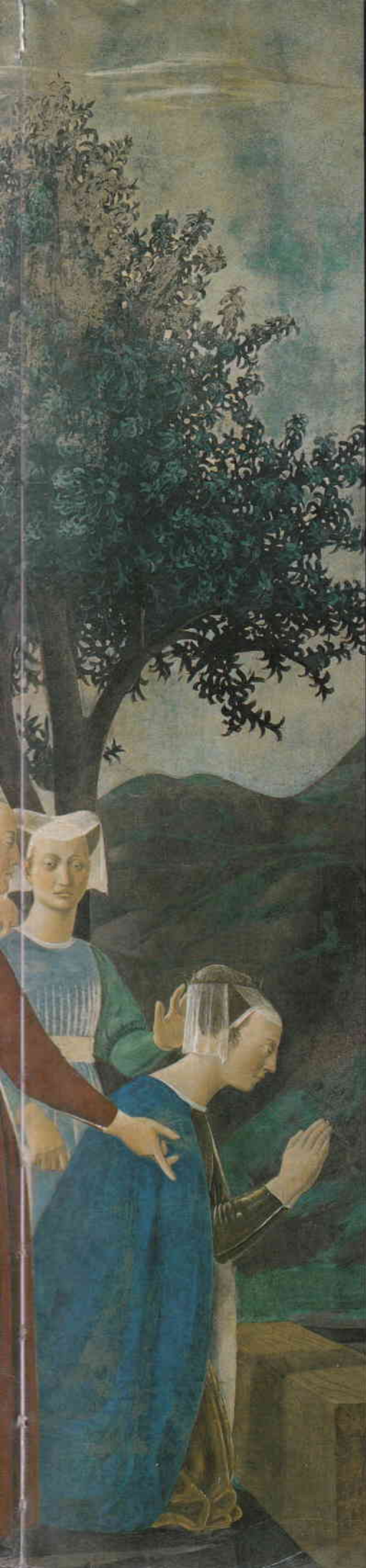Catherine Turrill, California State University, Sacramento

# HISTORY OF
# ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART

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*Painting · Sculpture · Architecture*

**SEVENTH EDITION**

**Frederick Hartt**
**David G. Wilkins**

Front cover: RAPHAEL. *Angelo Doni.* c. 1506. Panel, $24\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{4}$"
($63 \times 45$ cm). Pitti Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned by
Angelo Doni.

Frontispiece: PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Discovery of the Wood
of the True Cross* (detail), from the *Legend of the True Cross.* 1450s.
11'8" × 24'6" ($3.56 \times 7.47$ m).

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# CONTENTS

# PREFACE

## The History of *History of Italian Renaissance Art*

When Frederick Hartt's *History of Italian Renaissance Art* was first published more than forty years ago, it was a remarkable achievement. A large volume with dozens of color plates, it presented the story of Italian Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture as it was appreciated and understood by one of the great scholars and inspiring teachers of the period. Professor Hartt used evocative and poetic language to describe the works that he been teaching about for decades, and the book was an instant success. Each of Hartt's analyses was intended to send the reader back for another, closer look at the work of art. He was unapologetic about his enthusiasm for these works and determined to point out the beauty, skill, and optimism that, for him, were among the essential contributions of Renaissance art to the history of humanity.

Professor Hartt knew Italy and its artistic monuments well. He served in the United States Army in World War II as a member of the Allied Commission for Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives—a group charged with, among other duties, safeguarding works of art. He arrived in Florence in August 1944, soon after the Germans retreated, having bombed all the city's bridges except the historic Ponte Vecchio. Hartt played a crucial role in the documentation and protection of works of art hidden from the Germans and the restoration of monuments in Florence, recording these experiences in a book entitled *Florentine Art Under Fire* (1949). He also participated in the relief efforts that took place after the disastrous flood of the Arno River in Florence on November 4, 1966. As a result of his work on behalf of Italian art and culture, he was named a Knight of the Crown of Italy, an Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, an honorary citizen of Florence, and an honorary member of the Accademia founded in Florence in the late sixteenth century. He died in 1991, and was buried at the famous Florentine cemetery at San Miniato, overlooking the city he loved.

The history of Italian Renaissance art can be told in a number of different ways. Hartt's approach had its origins in the first history of Renaissance art, written by Giorgio Vasari in the sixteenth century. Like Vasari, Hartt emphasized works created in Florence, Rome, Siena, and Venice. While there is much that is worthy of attention in the art created in Naples, Milan, Ferrara, and other centers during the Renaissance, to include this material in detail would have detracted from Hartt's thesis that Renaissance art evolved in Florence and had its most fulfilling later devel-opment in Rome and Venice. His understanding that each of these cities evolved a unique style was the basis for his organization of his chapters around the developments in these centers. Such an approach remains appropriate, for the story of each city's art has an internal integrity that can be related to its political structure and social development.

Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, Hartt's model, was organized as a chronological series of biographies that discussed each artist as a creative individual. Hartt also chose to discuss each artist independently, although the careers of Ghiberti, Donatello, Michelangelo, and Raphael are divided over different chapters. While such an organization provides readers with a strong sense of the distinctive development of each artist, it also requires that they re-create how artists overlap in time and how a chronological understanding of events and works is helpful in analyzing the art of this period. Such a biographical emphasis often ignores the broader social and historical context within which these works were created—factors that have become more important in the study of art in recent decades.

Professor Hartt revised and expanded *History of Italian Renaissance Art* twice before his death in 1991. In 1993, I was invited to continue this process, and the fourth edition was published in 1994. As I set about updating Hartt's history in 1993–94, I was determined to maintain the integrity of the story that he first told so enthusiastically. I retained the basic organization of his text and the works discussed were those he originally chose. The fifth and sixth editions (2001 and 2006) had color illustrations throughout the text rather than plates, and included new works chosen to enrich the story Professor Hartt had laid out more than thirty years earlier. In these subsequent editions, I have introduced a number of views that show Renaissance fresco cycles in their original context. In addition, I have added new works that expand our understanding of the diversity of the visual culture of the period, including prints, ceramics, portrait medals, an illuminated manuscript, a printed book, an enameled reliquary, additional examples of drawings, and works in terra-cotta, stained glass, and tapestry. A photograph of the marble quarries at Carrara suggests the difficulties Michelangelo faced in finding the quality of marble that he felt was necessary for his works. Digitized reconstructions increase our understanding by suggesting the original appearance of certain important works. I have also added illustrations of some of the monuments of ancient Roman architecture

and sculpture that were available for study by artists during this period. While Hartt emphasized religious art, I have increased the proportion of secular works, including *cassoni* panels and a *desco da parto*—works made to celebrate the family at the time of weddings or births. The addition of the names of patrons to the captions and of a series of portraits of patrons and personalities enrich our knowledge of the context within which these works were created. The emphasis throughout, however, has remained as Hartt originally envisioned it—on the work of art and on the individual creator rather than on the social and historical context.

Prior to the fifth edition (2001), *History of Italian Renaissance Art* contained no discussion of works by women artists. This seventh edition includes six works by four of the determined women who were able to practice as artists during this period. In addition, works commissioned by women (including architecture) are discussed, and portraits of women encourage consideration of the attitudes held toward women during this period.

Despite the fact that scholars and enthusiasts have been writing passionately about Italian Renaissance art since the sixteenth century, the impressive number of recent publications indicates there is still much to learn about this complex period. If I were to try to encompass even a portion of the new scholarship published since the sixth edition, this volume would have to expand dramatically. The updated bibliography provides a guide for further reading on the many artists and topics discussed here.

Because location was such an important consideration in the design of Renaissance works of art, paintings and sculptures that are still in their original settings—with the exception of obvious examples of frescoes, mosaics, and façade sculptures—are indicated by a 🏛 in the captions. For works today in private collections or museums, the original locations, if known, can be found in the captions.

## What's New in this Edition

There are more color illustrations, with a special emphasis on showing architecture and architectural models in color. The portrait medals are all reproduced to scale (see figs. 6.2–6.3, 10.2–10.3, 12.4–12.5, 15.6–15.7, 15.29, 17.2, 17.11). The text has been rewritten for greater clarity, but always with an eye to preserving the evocative and compelling voice of the book's original author. Additional selections from primary sources have been added: Vespasiano da Bisticci's description of Duke Federico da Montefeltro's library at Urbino, Giovanni Rucellai's comments on the satisfaction he gained from the works of architecture he commissioned, and Vasari's description of how Raphael engaged Marcantonio Raimondi to produce

engravings after his drawings and paintings. Some chapters have been retitled to reflect their content more accurately. A greater diversity of media is evident with the addition of more drawings and prints, as well as examples of porcelain, stained glass, and blown glass. The exploration of iconographic themes is expanded with the addition of several portraits and a new representation of the David and Goliath theme. A new section on "Locating Renaissance Works of Art" (p. 715) will help teachers, students, and travelers locate works from the period in American and European museums.

### 1 Prelude: Italy and Italian Art
New additions in this chapter include an ancient Roman relief that was known during the Renaissance, a print showing artists and an artist's workshop, and one of the drawings that Vasari included in his personal collection. A new section discusses techniques of printmaking during this period.

### 2 Duecento Art in Tuscany and Rome
The plans of the major churches in this chapter have been expanded to include their respective monastic complexes, with numbers indicating the location of artworks illustrated in the book.

### 3 Florentine Art of the Early Trecento
This chapter offers an expansive discussion of Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes and discusses his influence on later Trecento painters.

### 4 Sienese Art of the Early Trecento
Duccio and his followers are here covered in detail. The iconographic diagrams for Duccio's *Maestà* are simplified and shown in black and white to make the numbering clear, while the placement of the reconstructions on facing pages adds clarity to the discussion.

### 5 Later Gothic Art in Tuscany and Northern Italy
Several additions enrich this chapter, including a color view of Orcagna's *Assumption* relief at Orsanmichele. A new medium is emphasized by the addition of the stained-glass rose window at Santa Maria Novella. Also new to this edition is the discussion of how medieval geometry and proportional systems provided a basis for Italian Gothic architecture, as demonstrated in the diagram of the proportional scheme planned for Milan Cathedral.

### 6 The Renaissance Begins: Architecture
The developments that took place in Florentine art during the Quattrocento had a widespread influence and are the subject of this and the next seven chapters. This chapter

includes photographs of a reconstructed model and a diagram of one of Brunelleschi's devices for displaying perspective and clarifies the construction and engineering of Brunelleschi's dome for Florence Cathedral through new illustrations that include the herringbone brickwork, a model of the dome, and a reconstruction drawing of two of the machines Brunelleschi invented to aid construction combined with a section that shows the wooden and stone chains and other details. Brunelleschi's use of proportion is made evident in a section of his revolutionary San Lorenzo sacristy. A view of the Medici Palace today and reconstructed ground plans increase our understanding of the original structure.

## 7 Transitions in Tuscan Sculpture
The text in this chapter has been tightened and focused to emphasize the innovations made by Ghiberti, Donatello, Nanni di Banco, and Jacopo della Quercia.

## 8 Transitions in Florentine Painting
The visual culture of the period included inexpensive, mass-produced devotional works. One of the rare surviving examples, a print known as the *Madonna del Fuoco*, has been added to this chapter.

## 9 The Heritage of Masaccio: Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi
To emphasize the importance of Masaccio's innovations in painting, this chapter focuses on two painters who accepted the new style and then transformed it. An important feature in this chapter is a digital reconstruction of the framing for Angelico's San Marco altarpiece.

## 10 Florentine Architecture and Sculpture, c. 1430–55
This chapter continues the discussion of works by Alberti, Ghiberti, and Donatello, among others.

## 11 Florentine Painting at Mid-Century
This chapter demonstrates how the styles of Castagno, Uccello, Domenico Veneziano, and Piero della Francesca reference and expand upon the innovations of Masaccio.

## 12 Art in Florence Under the Medici I
New illustrations include a broad view of the front of one of Donatello's San Lorenzo pulpits and a more panoramic view of the interior of Santa Maria delle Carceri in Prato.

## 13 Art in Florence Under the Medici II
This chapter brings the Florentine Quattrocento to a close with works by Pollaiuolo, Verrochio, Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, and Ghirlandaio. Verrocchio's *Equestrian Monument of Bartolommeo Colleoni* is illustrated after cleaning. The works of Piero di Cosimo have been moved here.

## 14 The Renaissance in Central Italy
To expand our understanding of the impact of the Renaissance in Siena, two works by Neroccio de' Landi have been added: a female portrait, reproduced with its original frame, and his representation of a woman from ancient history, Claudia Quinta—part of a series of famous men and women. A new view of Luciano Laurana's courtyard at the Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, demonstrates the innovations of this important architectural monument. Art in Naples receives more attention with the inclusion of Alfonso of Aragon's triumphal arch at the Castel Nuovo. The works of Signorelli have been moved to this chapter.

## 15 Gothic and Renaissance in Venice and Northern Italy
The reworking of this chapter has been extensive, with additions that include the Gothic palace known as the Ca d'Oro in Venice, a print of a mythological subject by Mantegna, an Italian textile of the period, a printed book with painted decoration, and three new Venetian sculptures, one of which is the tomb of a doge.

## 16 The Origins of the High Renaissance
Additional works by Leonardo and Michelangelo enrich this chapter. A detail of the areas Leonardo painted on Verrocchio's *Baptism* establishes the revolutionary nature of his style from an early age. The treatment of the *Last Supper* is expanded by the addition of a preparatory drawing and a print after the fresco that shows details now lost because of the work's condition. New illustrations of Leonardo's *Burlington House Cartoon* and a drawing by Michelangelo for the *Battle of Cascina* bring us into intimate contact with the artists. Michelangelo's *St. Matthew* for the Duomo in Florence has been added to demonstrate his earliest use of the *figura serpentinata*.

## 17 The High Renaissance in Rome
Additions to this chapter include an illustration that clarifies Bramante's design for the Belvedere Palace, Michelangelo's spandrel of *David and Goliath* in the Sistine Chapel, Raphael's cartoon for the *School of Athens*, and Sebastiano del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus*.

## 18 New Developments c. 1520–50
Because the term "Mannerism" has become so inclusive as to be almost meaningless, in this edition the term is avoided. "Florentine court style" is used instead to define the characteristics of the new style that developed in Florence after the High Renaissance. During the sixteenth

century, prints, a relatively inexpensive medium, became a popular means by which monuments and styles were circulated in Europe. New additions in this chapter include a *chiaroscuro* woodblock print after a design by Parmigianino and one of the artists' portraits that illustrated Vasari's *Lives*.

## 19 High and Late Renaissance in Venice and on the Mainland

A world map published in Venice in 1511 emphasizes the new global understanding that emerged from exploration and trade at this time, while a glass *Nef* exemplifies Venetian glass production. Three additional north Italian portraits expand our understanding of the new roles being played by portraiture in Renaissance society, while each emphasizes the luxury textiles that were a part of Italian commercial success during the Renaissance.

## 20 The Late Sixteenth Century

New works in this chapter demonstrate the variety of Italian art at this time and reveal how Renaissance developments laid the groundwork for seventeenth-century art. They include Giambologna's *Mercury*, Arcimboldo's *Fire*, the church of Il Gesù in Rome, a portrait by Fede Galizia, and Caravaggio's *Madonna di Loreto*. To demonstrate the impact of global trade on the Renaissance, an example of porcelain inspired by Chinese models has been added.

# Acknowledgments

MAP I

R O M E

THE CENTER OF THE CITY
WITHIN THE AURELIAN WALLS

0                    2640'

0                    800 m.

N

Villa Madama

Borghese Gallery

TIBER RIVER

Aurelian Walls

Via del Corso

Belvedere Palace

VATICAN CITY

Castel S. Angelo

Piazza Barberini

St. Peter's Basilica

Via della Conciliazione

Via del Tritone

Via XX Settembre

Ponte S. Angelo

S. Salvatore in Lauro

Piazza Navona

Palazzo Madama

Piazza della Rotonda

Palazzo Sacchetti

Pantheon

SS. Apostoli

Via Nazionale

Sta. Maria Maggiore

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne

Sta. Maria sopra Minerva

Palazzo della Cancelleria

Palazzo Venezia

Aurelian Walls

Monument to Victor Emanuel II

Via dei Fori Imperiale

S. Pietro in Vincoli

Palazzo Farnese

Statue of Marcus Aurelius (copy)

Via Arenula

Piazza del Campidoglio

Villa Farnesina

Theater of Marcellus

Palazzo dei Conservatori

Isola Tibertina

Colosseum

Sta. Maria in Trastevere

Via S. Gregorio

S. Pietro in Montorio (Tempietto)

Sta. Cecilia

Via dei Cerchi

Circus Maximus

Viale Trastevere

Via delle Terme

TIBER RIVER

Via della Marmorata

Viale Aventino

Aurelian Walls

S. Paolo fuori le Mura

## MAP II

# FLORENCE
### THE CENTER OF THE CITY

0       1200'
0       400 m.

N

Fortezza da Basso

Via Faenza

Via Guelfa

Via Nazionale

Via Cavour

Via Ricasoli

Sant'Apollonia

S. Marco

Piazza S. Marco

SS. Annunziata

Accademia

Via dei Servi

Palazzo Medici-Riccardi

S. Lorenzo

Medici Chapel

Laurentian Library

Sta. Maria degli Angeli

Ospedale degli Innocenti

Sta. Maria Novella

Borgo S. Lorenzo

Piazza Sta. Maria Novella

Cathedral (Duomo)

S. Egidio

Piazza del Duomo

Borgo Pinti

Baptistery

Via de' Pecori

Campanile

Museo dell'Opera del Duomo

Via dell'Oriuolo

Lungarno Amerigo Vespucci

Borgo Ognissanti

Ognissanti

Palazzo Rucellai

Palazzo Strozzi

Piazza della Repubblica

Via del Corso

Orsanmichele

Borgo degli Albizi

Palazzo Pazzi

Casa Buonarotti

Via G. Verdi

Ponte A. Vespucci

Via della Vigna Nuova

Via Tornabuoni

Bargello

Via Ghibellina

A R N O

Lungarno Soderini

Lungarno Corsini

Sta. Trinita

Via Calzaiuoli

Piazza della Signoria

Piazza Sta. Croce

Sta. Croce

Ponte alla Carraia

SS. Apostoli

Lungarno Acciaioli

Loggia dei Lanzi

Uffizi Gallery

Palazzo dei Priori (now Palazzo Vecchio)

Pazzi Chapel

Lungarno Guicciardini

Ponte Sta. Trinita

Sta. Maria del Carmine

Ponte Vecchio

S. Spirito

Via Maggio

Piazza S. Spirito

Via Guicciardini

Sta. Felicita

Lungarno General Diaz

R I V E R

Ponte alle Grazie

Lungarno Torrigiani

Piazza dei Pitti

Lungarno Serristori

Via del Presto

Palazzo Pitti

Via Romana

Boboli Gardens

Forte di Belvedere

S. Miniato al Monte

MAP III

# VENICE
## THE CENTER OF THE CITY

0       900'
0       300m.

N

LAGUNA MORTA

S. Giobbe

Gesuiti

CANAL GRANDE

Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi

Scuola Grande di S. Marco

SS. Giovanni e Paolo

Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista

Fondaco dei Tedeschi

Rialto

Campo San Polo

S. Polo

Sta. Maria Formosa

Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari

Scuola Grande di S. Rocco

CANAL GRANDE

S. Pantaleone

Basilica di S. Marco

S. Zaccaria

Piazza San Marco

Scuola di S. Fantin

Doges' Palace

S. Marco Library

Zecca

CANAL GRANDE

CANALE DI SAN MARCO

S. Sebastiano

Ponte dell' Accademia

Scuola della Carità (Accademia Museum)

Sta. Maria della Salute

Dogana

S. Giorgio Maggiore

CANALE DELLA GIUDECCA

MAP IV
SIENA

0 _____ 1500'
0 _____ 500 m.

N

Via di Campansi

Viale Don Giovanni Minzoni

Via di Campo di Montluc

Viale Armando Diaz

Via G. Garibaldi

Via di Diccio o Biccafumi

Via del Pian

Via Baldessare Peruzzi

San Francesco

Viale F. Tozzi

Via dei Montanini

Viale V. Veneto

Via Banchi di Sopra

Via delle Terme

San Domenico

Via Banchi di Sotto

Fonte Gaia

Piazza del Campo

Via del Porrione

Via dei Pispini

Baptistry

Piccolomini Library

Palazzo Pubblico

Via di Pantaneto

Via S. Marano

Cathedral (Duomo)

Via di Città

Cassato di. Sotto

Hospital of the Scala

Via S. Pietro

Via Roma

Via di Stalloreggi

Pian dei Mantellini

Via T. Sarrocchi

Via delle Cedrelia

Porta Romana

San Niccolò del Carmine
(today: Santa Maria del Carmine)

Via di S. Marco

# ITALY

200 MILES
320 KM

N

ALPS

DOLOMITES

APPENNINES

Basel
Constance
Geneva
Lugano
Castiglione Olona
Bergamo
Milan
Brescia
Lodi
Pavia
Turin
Piacenza
Cremona
Mantua
Mirandola
Parma
Reggio
Modena
Genoa
Bologna
Carrara
Faenza
Pistoia
Forlì
Lucca
Prato
Pisa
Arno R.
Florence
Empoli
Livorno
San Gimignano
Volterra
Siena
Cortona
Montepulciano
Pienza
Elba
Orvieto
Bolsena
Viterbo
Caprarola
Rome

Pieve di Cadote
Trent
Feltre
Pordenone
Maser
Castelfranco
Vicenza
Treviso
Verona
Padua
Murano
Venice
Adige R.
Po R.
Ferrara
Ravenna
Rimini
Pesaro
Urbino
Sansepolcro
Arezzo
Ancona
Loreto
Gubbio
Fabriano
Perugia
Assisi
Todi
Spoleto
Tiber R.

LIGURIAN SEA

Corsica

Sardinia

TYRRHENIAN SEA

Elba

Naples
Bari
Brindisi
Otranto

ADRIATIC SEA

Dalmatia

Ragusa
(Dubrovnik)

Messina
Reggio di Calabria

Palermo
Monreale
Sicily

AFRICA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

# PRELUDE: ITALY AND ITALIAN ART

*1*

The matrix of Italian art is Italy itself (fig. 1.1). The variety of the landscape transforms a country roughly the size of California into a subcontinent, harboring an infinity of pictorial surprises. Alpine masses shining with snow in midsummer, fantastic Dolomitic crags, turquoise lakes reflecting sunlight onto cliffs, fertile plains, poplar-bordered rivers, sandy beaches, Apennine mountain chains enclosing green valleys, vast pasture lands, glittering bays enclosed by mountains, volcanic islands, dark forests, eroded deserts, gentle hills—all combine to make up the land of Italy. The variety of natural elements and the way in which the mountains separate one area from another also help to explain the diversity of Italian art created in various centers during the Renaissance.

But not all the beauty of Italy was provided by nature. The country and its people have made their peace in an extraordinary way. Many towns and even some large cities do not lie in the valleys but are perched on hilltops, sometimes at dizzying heights. The reason for such positions is not hard to understand, for most Italian towns were founded when defense was essential. At the same time, the views from their ramparts offered the inhabitants not only a military but also an intellectual command of surrounding nature. Where the land is fertile, those hills that are not crowned with villages, castles, or villas have been turned into stepped gardens, with terraces where wheat, the olive, and the vine—those essentials of Italian civilization—grow together. Only here and there does one come across wild tracts that have defied attempts at cultivation. Agriculture and forests are submitted to the ordering intelligence of human activity. On the Lombard plains, plots of woodland

*Opposite:* **1.1. Map of Italy.**

are marshaled in battalions; like perfect sentinels, cypresses guard the Tuscan hills. Three-hundred-year-old olive trees shimmer in gray and silver, winter and summer alike. The Italian climate is less gentle than its reputation; even in southern Italy and Sicily, winter can be dark and wet, while throughout the peninsula summer can be hot, autumn rainy, and spring capricious. Yet in three millennia of stormy marriage with the land, the Italians have created a harmony between human life and the natural world that is seldom found elsewhere.

During the modern era, the forces of industrialization have drained some historic hill farms of their population. Stone farmhouses now stand abandoned among untended olive trees and crumbling terraces. But one can still experience the Italian concord with nature. Country roads can be traveled, and hill farms are worked by pairs of long-horned oxen. Views across lines of cypresses and up rocky ledges reveal what might be the background of a fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli. The vast Umbrian spaces are much as Perugino saw them, and the woods in the Venetian plain seem ready to disclose a nymph and satyr from the paintings of Giovanni Bellini.

## Representing This World

Some of the earliest attempts at naturalistic representation found in Italian painting document the local landscape: Ambrogio Lorenzetti's view of the countryside around Siena in his *Allegory of Good Government in the City and Country* (see fig. 4.28), for example, or the Tuscan fields that Gentile da Fabriano placed behind a fleeing Holy Family in the *Flight into Egypt* (see fig. 8.4). It might be said that the history of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century painting in Italy can be understood as an attempt by artists to capture naturalism. During these centuries painters

experimented, trying to learn how to represent on a two-dimensional surface what is seen by the human eye: the effect of receding space we experience as we move in the world, the bulk and weight of figures and objects and their tie to gravity, and the softening effects of atmosphere in a landscape view. Sculptors from the same period gradually realized how to represent figures in positions that suggest the potential for movement, wearing clothing that seemed to respond to new, naturalistic poses. An example of this would be Donatello's *St. Mark* (see fig. 7.12). When the word "naturalism" is used in this book, it is describing the broad effects outlined above.

In discussing art, a difference is usually established between naturalism and realism. While naturalism refers to the attempt to mimic what we see, realism refers to the representation of the real world without idealization. Realism is less common in Italian Renaissance art because of the strong interest shown by patrons and artists in the notion of ideal beauty; see, for example, Michelangelo's *David* or Raphael's *Donna Velata* (see figs. 16.1, 17.54). Among the relatively rare examples of realism during the Renaissance, we might cite Masaccio's painting of a shivering man waiting to be baptized in a cold river, or Fede Galizia's *Portrait of Paolo Morigia* (see figs. 8.1, 20.57). After the introduction of oil paint into Italy some artists tried to represent the effect of light as it hits every fold of silk in a lustrous fabric, as in Moretto's *Portrait of a Young Man* (see fig. 19.35), or every wrinkle in an old man's face, as, again, in Galizia's *Portrait of Paolo Morigia*; such effects are described as naturalistic or realistic detail, respectively. Representing the world around them is one of the important ways in which Renaissance artists articulated the new ideas circulating in cities on the Italian

peninsula during this period. The interest in the real world expressed by naturalism and realism is yet another reason why the Renaissance has recently been described as the beginning of the Early Modern Period.

## The Role of Antiquity

The harmony with nature discussed above helps explain why Italian Renaissance art is distinctive. Another factor is the survival of artistic and architectural monuments from the culture of ancient Rome: sarcophagi, sculptures, and coins were abundant, as were fragments of architectural structures, some of which had been reused as decoration and/or structure in medieval buildings. Entire ancient monuments seldom survived; one exception is the Pantheon in Rome, the impressive dome of which soars 144 feet above the floor (fig. 1.2). The domes of both Florence Cathedral and St. Peter's in Rome (see figs. 6.7, 17.14, 20.11) were responses to the challenge proffered by the dome of the Pantheon. Also in Rome was the grand ruin of the Colosseum (fig. 1.3), the fabric of which had been mined for centuries because it provided an abundant source of cut stone; only when Pope Benedict XIV halted the destruction in 1749 was the Colosseum saved. The half-columns of the Colosseum's exterior provided Renaissance architects with a demonstration of how the Greek architectural orders could be applied to a structure, influencing such monuments as Leonbattista Alberti's Palazzo Rucellai (see fig. 10.5).

Even an ancient coin or the fragmentary torso of a sculpted figure could provide inspiration to Renaissance artists. Ancient works were presumed to be illustrations of ancient life. Renaissance artists and architects made
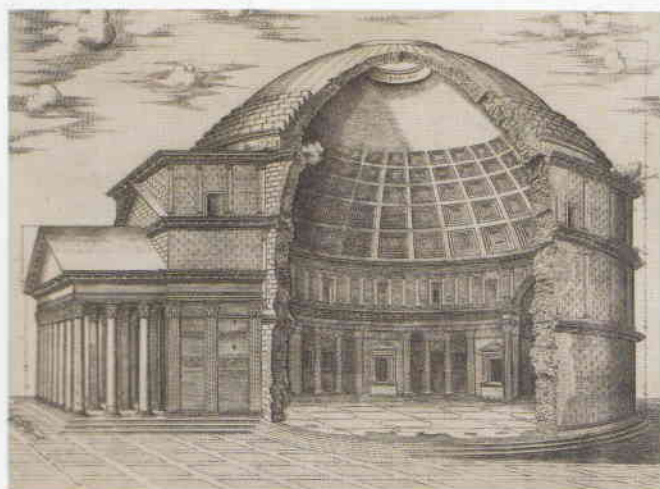


1.2. The ancient Roman Pantheon, built 123–25 CE, in a cut-away illustration from Antonio Lafreri's *Speculum Romanae magnificentiae*. Engraving, 1564. British Museum, London.



1.3. The ancient Roman amphitheater known as the Colosseum, built 72–80 CE, from Antonio Lafreri's *Speculum Romanae magnificentiae*. Engraving, 1564. British Museum, London.

drawings from ancient Roman remains, and humanists and artists were excited when new examples were found. In 1506 the heroic group of *Laocoön and His Sons* (see fig. 17.3) was discovered in the ruins of the Golden House of Nero in Rome. The dramatic physical and emotional struggle seen in these figures had an almost immediate impact on the works of Michelangelo; see, for example, figures 17.42–17.43. Another important discovery was a fragment that became known as the *Belvedere Torso* (see fig. 17.4) because it was installed in the new Belvedere Palace (see fig. 17.17), now part of the Vatican Museums. The bronze equestrian monument of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (fig. 1.4) had been visible in Rome throughout the Middle Ages, when it was revered because it was presumed to be a portrait of the Emperor Constantine, who had allowed Christianity to be practiced freely within the Roman Empire. During the Renaissance, the statue was appreciated as an impressive work of art, and it played a role in inspiring Donatello's and Verrocchio's monuments to contemporary mercenary generals (see figs. 10.23, 13.16).

One of the best-preserved examples of the ideal nude male figure available during the Renaissance was the *Apollo Belvedere* (fig. 1.5). When and where this sculpture



1.5. *Apollo Belvedere*. Second century CE. Marble, 7'4" (2.2 m). Vatican, Rome. Ancient Roman copy of a bronze sculpture of the fourth century BCE, perhaps by the ancient Greek sculptor Leochares. The sculpture takes its name from its placement, by 1511, in the Belvedere Palace in the Vatican. The figure probably originally held arrows in his left hand.

The Vatican Museums, which can trace their origins back to the sixteenth century, include the collections gathered or commissioned by the papacy. They are especially rich in ancient and early Christian sculpture and in paintings once in St. Peter's Basilica or in Roman churches. This complex also includes the Sistine Chapel, with Renaissance paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (see figs. 17.1, 17.23). The tapestries that once decorated the chapel's lower walls are in another part of the museum. There is also now a section devoted to modern religious art.



1.4. *Equestrian Monument to Marcus Aurelius*. 161–80 CE. Bronze (originally gilded), over-life-sized. In the Renaissance, this monument became the centerpiece for the piazza on the Capitoline Hill (see figs. 20.12–20.13). This image shows the statue before it was cleaned and moved to the Capitoline Museum, Rome. A replica now stands in its place on the Capitoline Hill.

was discovered is unknown, but it was in the papal collections by 1509 and in the Belvedere by 1511. Some of Michelangelo's works can be compared to the *Apollo Belvedere*, including *Bacchus* and Christ in the early *Pietà* (see figs. 16.36–16.37), but in general Michelangelo added a level of emotional expression not found in the *Apollo*.

Several other types of ancient sculpture also provided inspiration, including sarcophagi (see fig. 2.22), standing male figures wearing togas or armor, and relief sculptures. The large relief of *Marcus Aurelius Sacrificing Before the Capitoline Temple* (fig. 1.6) probably originally decorated a triumphal arch. At least thirteen Renaissance drawings of this relief are known. The high-relief figure of Marcus Aurelius, to the left of center, stands in the relaxed position known as *contrapposto*—a pose common in Greek and Roman sculpture and often adopted during the Renaissance (see fig. 7.12)—while the manner in which his toga both conceals and reveals his body can be compared to similar effects in Renaissance figures by Donatello and Nanni di Banco (see figs. 7.12, 7.15). The realistic treatment of the heads in the relief—note especially that of the



1.6. *Marcus Aurelius Sacrificing Before the Capitoline Temple.* 176–80 CE. White marble, 11'6" × 7'9" (3.5 × 2.36 m). Ancient Roman, from a triumphal arch (?). Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome. Certain areas of the relief have been restored, including the arms and hands of all of the main figures.

figure to the far right—demonstrates another important Classical attribute that inspired Renaissance sculptors.

The impact of these and other ancient works on Renaissance artists and architects will become evident in the following chapters. Artifacts, art, and architecture from the Graeco-Roman world were supplemented by ancient texts, which were studied by humanists, the scholar–teachers of this period. The human dignity and critical reasoning they found in ancient writings played an important role in the transformation of art and society that we now call the Italian Renaissance. While the humanists showed an interest in all areas of ancient learning, they were at the same time determined to reconcile the ideas they found in Greek and Roman authors with Christian beliefs.

This ancient material had been available throughout the Middle Ages, but during that period it had little effect. Changes in late medieval society and culture must have prepared the way so that Renaissance scholars and artists could be receptive to the visual and intellectual impact of the remains of the Graeco-Roman world. The story of the Italian Renaissance as a historical and cultural whole is complex, and the role of antiquity in the creation of works of art is only one part of a much larger narrative that is still being analyzed.

## The Cities

The art, culture, and history discussed in this volume were focused in cities on the Italian peninsula. The growth of these cities, the wealth accumulated there, and the increasing sophistication of urban life are important foundations for the developments that became the Renaissance. To speak of these cities as Italian is factually incorrect, for the nation of Italy was not established until the second half of the nineteenth century. The term "Italian cities" is correct only in the sense that these centers existed on the Italian peninsula, and their citizens were unified by a common language, albeit one divided into many distinct dialects.

The Italian language uses the same word (*paese*) for village and country (in the sense of nation), and to a medieval Italian the boundaries of "country" did not extend beyond what could be seen from a hilltop village. Maps of Italy in the late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance look like mosaics, the pieces representing political entities that were sometimes hardly larger than a village. These communes, which have often been compared to the city-states of ancient Greece, were all that remained of the Roman Empire, or of the kingdoms and dukedoms founded in the disruptive period following the barbarian invasions and the ensuing breakup of ancient Roman society.

At the outset of the late Middle Ages, most city-states were republics, but in Lombardy, in the northwest, some were ruled by their bishops. In general, the republics were merchant cities and their governments were dominated by manufacturers, traders, and bankers. These republics were often in a state of war with each other, even with neighbors (Florence with Fiesole, Assisi with Perugia). Even more disruptive than the inter-communal wars, however, were the eruptions of family against family and party against party within the communes. Under such conditions, it was easy for powerful individuals to undermine the independence of a city-state. Nobles in their castles, mercenary generals ostensibly hired to protect the republic, and powerful merchants struggled to gain control of the prosperous towns; their success in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries often led to the loss of communal liberties. The most successful of the superpolities was the papacy, which maintained various degrees of control over a wide belt of central Italian cities from its center in Rome.

Some of the republics were destined for greatness. By the thirteenth century, Venice had established an enormous empire in support of its commercial ties with the East. By the end of the thirteenth century, Florence was trading with northern Europe and Asia and had so many branches of its banking firms in Europe that Pope Innocent III declared that there must be five elements, rather than four, because wherever Earth, Water, Fire, and Air were found in combination, one also saw Florentines. Other important republics included Siena, Lucca, Pisa, and Genoa, all of which were separate, proud, independent states. Each state, whether a republic or ruled by a despot, tended to absorb its smaller neighbors by conquest or purchase. As a result, by the end of the fifteenth century the peninsula was divided into a decreasing number of polities, each dominating a relatively large subject territory. Yet they were unable to unite against the menace of the increasingly centralized monarchies of the rest of Europe, which in the sixteenth century were to threaten Italy on several occasions.

Florence's ground plan reveals the nature of the expansion of one Italian city state (see Map II, p. 13). A bird's-eye view shows the city in the fifteenth century, when it was the largest in Europe (fig. 1.7), with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The cathedral's Renaissance dome formed a focus for the city, which was surrounded by walls and the Tuscan hills. The core of the late medieval city was the ancient city plan, with north–south and east–west streets intersecting at right angles—an ordered urban design still visible in the map today. By the thirteenth century, the city had outgrown this core and more inhabitants clustered around the gates than within the ancient Roman plan. These areas of the city developed with no urban planning during the Middle Ages, and they are less regular than the ancient Roman center. During the thirteenth century a fortified city wall was built to protect the city. Later, a fourteenth-century circle of walls encompassed an area so large that the city had not filled it by the nineteenth century. Its gates were decorated with paintings and sculpture, both civic and religious in nature.
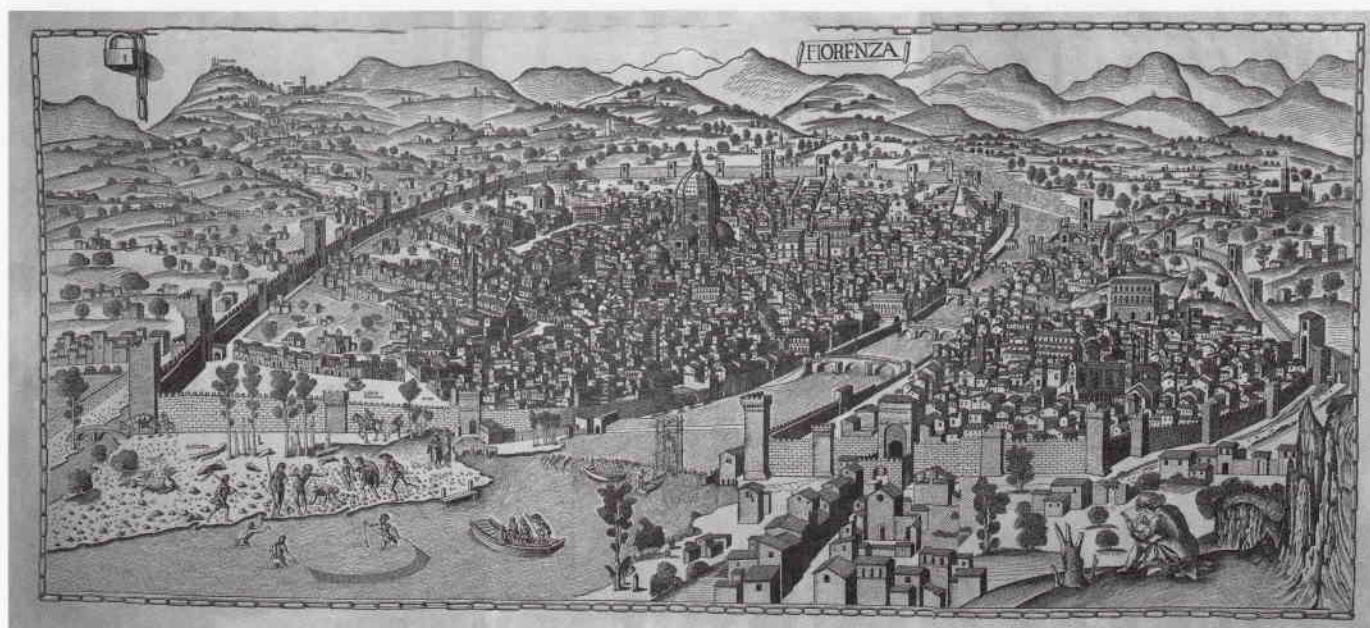


1.7. FRANCESCO DI LORENZO ROSSELLI (attributed to). *Florence: View with the Chain.* 1480s. Woodcut, 23 × 51³⁄₄" (58.4 × 131.5 cm). Every will drawn up in Florence was required to include a donation to the maintenance of the city walls. Compare to Map II, p. 13.

The print shown in figure 1.8 documents an eighteenth-century Florentine festival, but it reminds us how the civic and religious spaces of the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance provided a setting for public festivities and ceremonies: fairs, theatrical productions, sporting events, weddings, funerals, triumphal processions. While records document the costumes, floats, music, temporary triumphal arches, dramatic productions, and other aspects of such events, the visual evidence is slim. Only a later representation such as this can suggest the excitement of such an experience within its communal setting. Even today, on certain national, regional, and civic holidays, elaborate traditional processions and rituals play an important role in the life of Italian cities.

The hill town of Siena (fig. 1.9, and see Map IV, p. 15) is located some 45 miles south of Florence over winding roads—in the Middle Ages probably a day's journey on horseback. A wealthy commercial and political rival of Florence, Siena was conquered by Florence in the middle of the sixteenth century. Instead of the foursquare intersections and powerful cubic masses of Florence, Siena presents us with climbs and descents, winding streets, and unexpected vistas. The Sienese were proud of their city and its reputation as a religious, charitable, and intellectual center. During the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, the city seems to have been governed fairly and justly by civic-minded citizens.

The city of Venice (fig. 1.10 and see Map III, p. 14), is unique in its position. With buildings supported by wooden piles in a lagoon along the Adriatic shore, Venice had no need for city walls or the massive house construction of mainland towns. The result was an architecture whose freedom and openness come as a surprise when compared to the fortress-like character of many Italian cities. The great S-shaped form that divides Venice is the Grand Canal, along which the city's wealthiest citizens built their palaces (see figs. 15.8, 15.59).

In the thirteenth century, Rome (see Map IV on p. 15) was still relatively unimportant, and during the period from 1309 to 1377, when the popes were resident in



*C. Veduta della Metropolitana Fiorentina e del Battistero di S. Gio. con la Processione del Corpus Domini.   T.XXI*

**1.8. GIUSEPPE ZOCCHI.** *The Piazza of Florence Cathedral in 1754, with the Baptistery and Bell Tower, during the Procession of Corpus Domini, June 23.* 1754. Engraving, 18½ × 26⅝" (40.71 × 60.75 cm). During this procession the relics of St. John the Baptist were carried from the Cathedral to the Baptistery and then returned to the Cathedral. The vantage point in this view is imaginary, for the Cathedral complex is surrounded by buildings.

As the center of Florentine worship and as an important civic monument, the Duomo complex, with Baptistery, Bell Tower, and Cathedral, became an important repository for Florentine art, including balconies for musical performance and monuments to individuals (see figs. 2.39 10.19, 11.3).

1.9. Aerial view of Siena showing the Palazzo Pubblico (City Hall). Compare to Map IV, p. 15.



1.10. Aerial view of Venice showing S. Marco and the Doge's Palace. Compare to Map III, p. 14.

France, there was little artistic activity. Only in the later fifteenth century did the papacy show a renewed vigor by beginning to commission works of art there (see figs. 13.19, 14.16–14.18). By the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the papacy was an important political and territorial force, Rome had become the crucible for the full expression of what is known as the High Renaissance.

## The Guilds and the Status of the Artist

The typical central and northern Italian city-state of the late Middle Ages was dominated by guilds—independent associations of businessmen, bankers, and artisan-manu-facturers—in virtually every sphere of commercial and political life. The Florentine Republic was founded on commerce and ruled by the representatives of these guilds. The guilds, however, were forced to accept the domination of the Parte Guelfa, the single political entity permitted in this proto-democracy. If considered restrictive by modern standards, it was in advance of anything conceived of in Western Europe since the days of Pericles and ancient Athens. In Florence the position of the guilds was expressed by the figures of their patron saints in niches at Orsanmichele (see figs. 7.1, 7.8–7.9, 7.12–7.13, 7.15), a civic building that held the food supply guaranteed by the republic during an era when famine was a constant threat.

The seven major guilds (Arti, as they were called) comprised the Arte di Calimala, refiners of imported woolen cloth; the Arte della Lana, wool merchants who manufactured cloth; the Arte dei Giudici e Notai, for judges and notaries; the Arte del Cambio, for bankers and money-changers; the Arte della Seta, for silk weavers; the Arte dei Medici e Speziali, for doctors and pharmacists; and the Arte dei Vaiai e Pellicciai, for furriers. Painters were admitted to the guild of doctors and pharmacists in 1314, perhaps because they had to grind their colors just as pharmacists ground materials for medicines. In the 1340s painters were classified as dependents of physicians, perhaps because painters and doctors enjoyed the protection of St. Luke, who was reputedly both artist and physician. Only in 1378 did the painters become an independent branch within the Medici e Speziali.

The number of intermediate and minor guilds was constantly shifting. Among the former, never admitted to the rank of the major guilds, was the Arte di Pietra e Legname, artisans who worked in stone and wood. This guild included only those sculptors who specialized in these two materials. A sculptor trained in metals such as bronze was required to join a major guild, the Arte della Seta. Goldsmiths and armorers each had their own guild.

At the bottom of the social structure, outside the guilds, were the wool carders, on whose labors much of the fortune of the city depended. Their situation in some ways was comparable to that of the slaves of ancient Athens, for although the Ciompi, as they were called, were permitted to leave their employment, their activities were strictly circumscribed by law. These workers, who constantly hovered on the brink of starvation, revolted in 1378 and founded a guild of their own, but this organization and its participation in government were both short-lived. The oligarchy resumed control and put down the Ciompi by mass slaughter and individual execution, thus resuming control over the economic and political fortunes of the republic.

The guilds to which artists belonged were part of the Mechanical Arts, not the rigidly defined Liberal Arts—grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music—which were considered the only activities suitable for a gentleman in medieval feudal societies. In the



1.11. ANDREA PISANO (from a design by Giotto?). *Art of Sculpture.* c. 1334–37. Marble, 32³⁄₄ × 27¹⁄₄" (83.2 × 69.2 cm). Removed from original location on the Campanile, Florence (see fig. 3.25). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence.
The Museo dell'Opera del Duomo is an Italian institution found in many cities that houses works of art related to the town's cathedral complex. Florence's is one of the richest, and includes works from the Baptistery, Bell Tower, and Cathedral. Among the many important works preserved there are Donatello's *The Penitent Magdalen* and Michelangelo's *Pietà* (see figs. 12.6, 20.16).

Italian city-states, however, being linked to the Mechanical Arts represented a positive advantage to painters, sculptors, and architects because of the greater independence this made possible. To demonstrate how contemporary work is related to the Genesis narrative, Florentine professions were represented in a series of reliefs on the exterior of the *campanile* (bell tower) of the Cathedral of Florence. Subsequent reliefs represent the early activities of humanity, with the Mechanical Arts among them, including painting, sculpture (fig. 1.11), and architecture.

Later, painting and sculpture were included among the Liberal Arts. In the late fourteenth century, the Florentine writer Filippo Villani compared the painters of his era to those who practiced the Liberal Arts. In 1404 the Paduan humanist Pier Paolo Vergerio claimed—erroneously—that painting had been one of the four Liberal Arts taught to ancient Greek boys. At the end of the fifteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci wrote eloquently about the importance of the Liberal Arts for artists (see p. 446). The stakes were economic as well as social; evidence suggests that the fifteenth-century artist was generally not well paid, although in the sixteenth century Michelangelo (who claimed noble ancestry), Titian (who was ennobled by the Holy Roman Emperor), Raphael, and many other artists attained international fame, respect, and wealth. Artists who could attach themselves to a princely court—such as Andrea Mantegna and Leonardo da Vinci in the fifteenth century and Giorgio Vasari and Benvenuto Cellini in the sixteenth—earned a regular salary and could enforce their style on others. By the late sixteenth century, academies under princely patronage (see p. 649) began to replace the guilds.

## The Artist at Work

Artists almost always worked on commission. It would not have occurred to an artist of the thirteenth or fourteenth century to paint a picture or carve a statue for any reason other than to satisfy a patron, and an artist who was a good manager would have had a backlog of commissions. Those who were not good managers were often late delivering finished works to their patrons. Artists did not work in the kind of studios that we associate with later centuries. The word itself, which means "study" in Italian, only came into use in the seventeenth century, when artists were members of academies. In the late Middle Ages and throughout much of the Renaissance, an artist worked in a *bottega* (shop)—a word that also encompasses the apprentices and paid assistants who labored under the direction of the master. Apprentices entering the system could be as young as seven or eight, and their instruction was paid for by their families. Until the late sixteenth century, women were excluded from the

apprenticeship system, in part because they were forbidden to join the appropriate guilds. Sometimes the *bottega* was entered, like a shop, from the street and the artist at work might be viewed by passersby. Artists might even exhibit finished work to the public in their shops. Masaccio, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Andrea del Castagno, Antonio del Pollaiuolo, and others might accept commissions for jewelry, painted wooden trays (customarily given to new mothers; see fig. 12.3), painted shields for tournaments, processional banners, or designs for embroidered vestments or other garments. Artists also designed triumphal arches, floats, and costumes for festivals that celebrated civic, religious, and private events (see fig. 12.28). Unfortunately, little of this work survives; its loss is a huge lacuna in our study and understanding of Italian Renaissance art. We do, however, have a glimpse of such works and of a *bottega* of the period in a fifteenth-century Florentine engraving (fig. 1.12). The workshop of a goldsmith/sculptor at the lower left shows ewers, large plates, and elaborate belts being offered for sale while an engraver is at work on a copper plate to be used to make a print. Outside the shop, a bust of a man wearing elaborate armor is displayed and the master is carving a female portrait bust. Note how the counter protrudes into the street and how the opening could be closed by dropping a hinged flap held open by a hook on the building's façade. A painter is shown not in his *bottega*, but working in situ on scaffolding, adorning the structure with garlands and ribbons inspired by the sculptural decoration found on ancient Roman structures. He is accompanied by an assistant who is grinding pigments. In the structure to the right, a bookseller displays his wares on the lower floor, while above a musician plays an organ. Mercury, shown in a cart drawn by hawks, is protecting the arts as they were practiced in Florence, for the towered building in the background is the Palazzo dei Priori, the arched structure the Loggia della Signoria (see figs. 2.40–2.41).

In the sixteenth century the *bottega* declined in importance because of the new emphasis on the creative genius of the individual artist. By mid-century the new academic conception of the artist dominated, and in his old age Michelangelo would protest that he "was never a painter or a sculptor like those who keep shops."

## The Products of the Painter's *Bottega*

The principal objects made by a painter in a *bottega* were altarpieces. Such artworks functioned as public religious images set upon altars in churches. An altarpiece might represent the Virgin Mary or Christ or

**1.12. Attributed to BACCIO BALDINI.** *The Planet Mercury and the Professions Practiced under His Sign.* c. 1464–65. Engraving, 12¼ × 8½" (32.4 × 22 cm). British Museum, London.

This engraving is one of a series depicting what at the time were considered to be the seven planets (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn), and the various human activities over which each had an influence. Soldiers were found under the control of Mars, the ancient god of war, for example, while Venus controlled lovers. Under the planet Mercury were found men of science, art, and invention. The artist to whom the series is attributed, Baccio Baldini (1436–c. 1487), was a goldsmith, a logical trade for someone experimenting in the relatively new medium of engraving. Documents reveal that in the late 1470s, there were at least forty-four goldsmiths' and silversmiths' *botteghe* in Florence.

depict the saint to whom a particular church or altar was dedicated, together with scenes from his or her life.

Up to the thirteenth century—with the exact date varying from place to place—the priest stood behind the altar, facing the congregation. With the celebrant in this position, there was space on the altar only for the required crucifix, liturgical book, candles, and vessels of the Mass. Decoration, including images and narrative scenes, was limited largely to the front of the altar. This decoration could be sculpted in stone or precious metals or painted on wooden panels known as altar frontals (for a stone example, see fig. 15.19).

The new position of the priest left the altar table open for large-scale religious images. In the thirteenth century, the ritual was moved in front of the altar, so that the priest had his back to the congregation. In the fourteenth century, newly wealthy middle-class families began to pay for altarpieces and even for individual family chapels in which Mass could be said daily, sometimes many times a day, for the souls of departed family members. The crucifix, required for every altar, was a logical theme (see fig. 3.26, far left scene). The thirteenth century also saw tremendous growth in the veneration of the Virgin Mary. Patrons began to commission the images of the Madonna and Child that play so large a part in Italian art. If the chapel was large, the side walls, the space above the altarpiece, and the vaulted ceiling might be painted in fresco with subjects related to that of the altarpiece, and by the same artist. Many of the paintings treated in this book come from such family chapels. Some are still in place.

Altarpieces and the smaller pictures intended for private homes as aids to personal and familial devotions were almost always composed of wooden panels painted in tempera. Two panels joined together, offering two subjects, were known as a diptych. More common, however, were triptychs (three panels, see fig. 3.28) and polyptychs (many panels), the architectural frames of which often suggest the façades of Gothic churches (see figs. 4.5, 4.7). Frames with classical pilasters became common during the fifteenth century (see fig. 13.37).

An altarpiece on the main altar of a large church or cathedral might have images and scenes painted on the back as well. The custom of painting the predella, or base of the altarpiece, with small narrative scenes, visible only at close range, began early in the fourteenth century. At the same time, the pinnacles began to be decorated with angels, saints, or narrative scenes. The iconography of the altarpiece was determined by the clergy or by the wealthy family who ordered it, and even its shape could be subject to the patron's tastes.

Sometimes chapter houses intended for the meetings of a community of monks or nuns (see figs 5.1, 5.8), and sacristies, where the vessels, books, and vestments of the liturgy were kept, were endowed as family chapels and provided with altars (see fig. 6.16). The dining room in a monastery or nunnery was called the refectory; as rooms in which the members of the religious community ate silently, while listening to sermons or readings, these were often decorated with the scene of the Last Supper (see figs. 3.31, 11.1). The most famous example is by Leonardo da Vinci (see fig. 16.23).

# The Practice of Drawing

During the Renaissance, art was seldom made without some kind of preparatory study. Before the sixteenth century these studies were often made on parchment or vellum (processed animal skin) that could be cleaned or washed and used again. The few drawings that do survive from the period before 1430 seem to be pages from what are known as pattern books, compilations of drawings that might be useful in creating new works (see figs. 15.12–15.13). These were preserved because they would be useful in the *bottega*, not because they were considered to be works of art in and of themselves. Surviving examples include copies of works of art, models for standard compositions, and drawings of animals, birds, human figures, and heads.

Drawing was regarded as the foundation of art by Cennino Cennini, an artist who wrote *Il libro dell'arte* (*The Book of Art*) in about 1400. Cennini devoted twenty-eight brief chapters in his handbook to the subject, advising the painter to draw daily on paper, parchment, or panel with pen, charcoal, chalk, or brush. He urged the artist to draw from nature, from the paintings of the masters, or from the imagination. A generation later the architect and theorist Leonbattista Alberti, writing in Florence, spoke of "concepts" and "models" (doubtless sketches and detailed drawings) as customary preparations for painting and for *storie* (figural compositions). In the mid-sixteenth century, Giorgio Vasari described sketches as "a first set of drawings that are made to find the poses and the first composition," dashed down in haste by the artist, from which drawings "in good form" will later be made.

The importance of preparatory drawings may well have varied considerably from *bottega* to *bottega*, but the evidence suggests that the fourteenth-century painter drew such standard subjects as Madonnas, saints, and crucifixes directly on the surface of the work to be painted. Such drawings would be lost when the artist painted over them, of course, but today's technology sometimes allows a glimpse of these underdrawings. The painter might also have sketched complex figural compositions in small scale, on paper or parchment, to be kept next to the painting as a guide in the early stages. Dust, paint drippings, and the wear and tear of the *bottega* would have rendered such sketches hardly worth preserving.

By the mid-fifteenth century, the *spolvero* (Italian for "dust off"), a new technique previously used for ornamental borders, came into broader usage. The *spolvero* was a full-scale drawing of a complex detail, such as the head of a main figure. The outlines of the drawing were pricked with a sharp point and, after the drawing was placed on the painting's surface, it was tapped with a sponge or a porous bag loaded with charcoal dust, thus transferring rows of dots outlining the design. Surprisingly, these dots can sometimes still be made out (see fig. 17.33).

In the early sixteenth century, the *spolvero* was replaced by the cartoon (from the Italian word *cartone*, a heavy paper), a full-scale drawing made on sheets of paper glued together if necessary. The cartoon was pressed against the surface to be painted and its outlines were transferred by means of a metal point or stylus. Several cartoons and fragments of cartoons survive, including one for the lower figures in Raphael's *Philosophy* (see figs. 17.47–17.48), but they are few compared to the thousands that must have been executed. Two important compositions by Leonardo and Michelangelo are known only because other artists made copies of their cartoons (see figs. 16.30, 16.42).

The drawings included in the later sections of this book indicate the diversity of drawing styles and media practiced by Renaissance artists, which range from the precisely controlled study of light as it falls on drapery in a drawing by Leonardo (see fig. 16.13) to the quick strokes used to capture naturalistic movement in drawings by Raphael (see figs. 16.46, 17.50). Because drawings serve so many functions for artists, it should not be a surprise to realize that a single artist may use a number of different materials and styles, depending on the reason for creating the drawing; perhaps the supreme example is Leonardo da Vinci, sixteen of whose drawings are illustrated (see pp. 444–463). The majority of drawings that survive were made by painters; preparatory sketches by sculptors are much rarer. In creating a stone sculpture, the artist probably drew the profiles of the four sides directly on the block before beginning to carve. For the creation of figures in stone or bronze, models in clay, terra-cotta, or plaster in various sizes were probably used as guides as the work developed. Although many drawings by architects survive, we know from documents that small-scale models in three dimensions also guided builders as they erected buildings. Sometimes these were made to be viewed by the patron as part of a competition among architects. Surviving examples include the wooden model for the façade Michelangelo designed for the Medicean church of San Lorenzo (see fig. 18.3).

To our twenty-first-century eyes, many of these drawings seem to be works of art in themselves: we admire the long, flowing lines of Botticelli's drawing of a walking female figure (see fig. 13.25), the subtle three-dimensionality of a head drawn by Perugino (see fig 1.20), and the vigorous definition of the musculature of a nude figure by Michelangelo (see fig. 16.43). These were intended, however, as steps in the process of creating larger and more complex works in more permanent materials.

# The Practice of Painting

Between 1200 and 1600, paintings were made from a variety of materials. In the thirteenth century, tempera and fresco were the techniques used, but by the end of the fifteenth century, oil paint gradually became more common. By the end of the sixteenth century, the oil-on-canvas technique, which during the seventeenth century became the most popular painting medium in the West, had been developed in Venice. Oil paint was a more flexible medium, and the loose, suggestive brushstrokes in a painting made by the elderly Titian (see fig. 19.26) are completely different from the fine detail apparent in a painting in tempera made in Venice more than two hundred years earlier (see fig. 5.14).

The intricate procedures of the painter's craft, as practiced in Florence and northern Italy during the late medieval and much of the early Renaissance periods, are described in detail by Cennini, who states that he studied with Agnolo Gaddi—the son and pupil of Taddeo Gaddi, who had been an assistant of Giotto—but wrote his treatise in Padua, in northern Italy. The art of painting as described by Cennini is how things were done in his own Paduan *bottega*, but we have no other technical handbook from this period, and what Cennini says, although not necessarily relevant to earlier periods or other centers, must be read carefully.

**CREATING A TEMPERA PAINTING.** The following description of the creation of a tempera painting is based both on Cennini's description and evidence from surviving examples of the technique. The first step after the design was approved by the patron was the construction by a carpenter of panels of finely morticed and sanded poplar, linden, or willow wood (fig. 1.13). At this time, the frame was also constructed and attached to the panels. The panels and frame were then covered with gesso, a mixture of finely ground plaster and glue. Sometimes the gesso was covered with a surface of linen, itself soaked in gesso and then covered with still more gesso. When dry, the surface could be given a finish as smooth as ivory.

Cennini is explicit about how to compose a single figure on a panel. The underdrawing began with a piece of charcoal tied to a reed or stick, which gave the artist sufficient distance from the panel to allow him to judge the composition as it developed. Shading was done by means of light strokes, erasures with a feather. When the design was acceptable, the feather could erase all but dim traces of the original strokes, and the drawing could then be reinforced with a pointed brush dipped in a wash of ink and water; the brush was made of hairs from the tail of a gray squir-
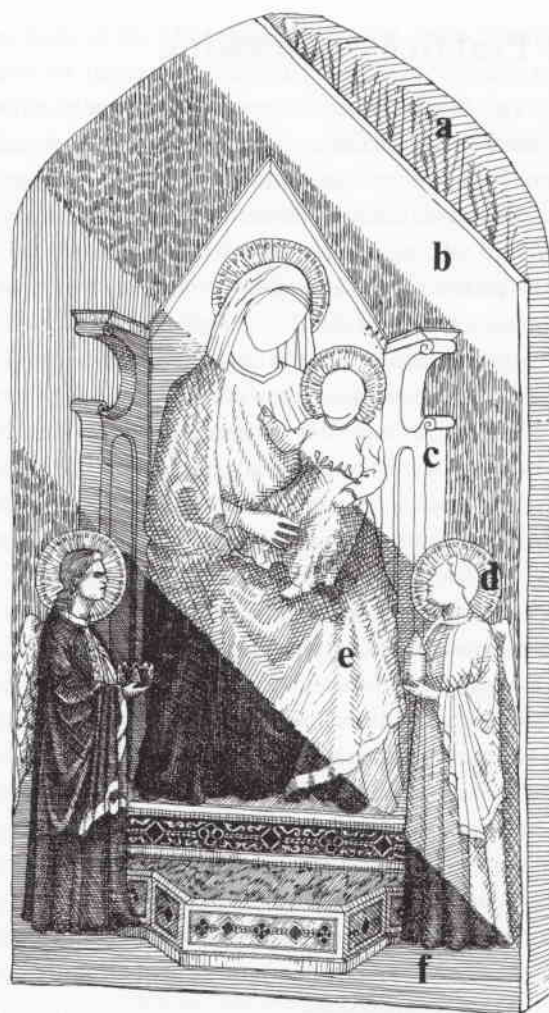


1.13. Diagram of a tempera panel dissected to show principal layers: a. wooden panel; b. gesso, sometimes reinforced with linen; c. underdrawing; d. gold leaf; e. underpainting; f. final layers of tempera.

rel. After the panel was swept free of charcoal, the painter shaded in the drapery folds and some of the shadow on the face with a blunt brush with the same wash, "and thus," Cennini says, "there will remain to you a drawing that will make everyone fall in love with your work."

The next step, before any additional painting took place, was the application of gold; in panel paintings of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and early fifteenth centuries, the background behind the figures and the haloes around the heads of saints were almost invariably gold leaf, applied in small sheets over bole, a red sizing or glue. Gold was used because of its value and beauty and because its luminosity suggested the light of heaven. Lines incised around the contours of the figures and haloes guided the gilder. In many paintings, the slight overlapping of these gold sheets can still be discerned. The gold leaf tends to wear thin if tempera paintings are cleaned, and their backgrounds

sometimes display hints of the red bole. In the thirteenth century, gold haloes and sometimes parts of the background were incised to make a pattern in relief, but by about 1330 these areas were decorated using low-relief punches shaped like flowers, stars, cusped Gothic arches, and other patterns to emboss their designs into the gold surface. The fact that the gilded background was done before the painting meant that the composition could be changed only with great difficulty.

When the gilding of the background was complete, the painter would build up the actual painting in thin layers of tempera: ground colors mixed with egg yolk. Because yolk dries rapidly, the painter could not easily change a form or correct mistakes and the tiny individual strokes of the brush, again made of gray squirrel hair, can still be seen if you examine a tempera painting closely. Generally parallel and seldom overlapping, these brushstrokes follow the forms of flesh or drapery in concentric curves.

Cennini instructed the artist painting drapery to make three dishes of the chosen color, the first full strength, the second mixed half-and-half with white, and the third an equal mixture of the first two, thus accounting for dark, light, and intermediate tones. The highlights, brushed on last in white or near-white or sometimes even yellow or gold, have inevitably been the first elements to disappear in the rough cleaning to which most old pictures have been subjected. The *terra verde* (green earth) used for the underpainting of the flesh created the unusual greenish flesh tones characteristic of this period (see fig. 2.11). Cennini also instructed the painter how to achieve an effect of iridescent drapery by using a different color for highlights from that employed for darker areas (as can be seen best in frescoes by Giotto and others; see fig. 3.13). The methods Cennini described reveal the slow, painstaking approach required for painting in tempera.

Blue was a special problem. The two available pigments were both imported and expensive: azurite came from Germany, and ultramarine, which was as costly as gold (sometimes more so), was produced by grinding lapis lazuli imported from Afghanistan. Both were customarily mixed with white, as Cennini describes, although in the case of the Virgin's mantle, which was typically painted blue to represent her as Queen of Heaven, the white was often omitted (see fig. 4.17). In most early altarpieces her mantle has turned dark grayish-green through the transformation of the egg medium over time. By the end of the fourteenth century, apparently, painters began to notice the gradual color change, and in most later paintings the Virgin's blue mantle was painted with materials that retain their intended hue. Varnish was applied to tone down the fresh bright colors and flashing gold of tempera altarpieces; varnish has even been found on thirteenth-century panels beneath a layer of

fourteenth-century repainting. When a painting was displayed in a church, candle smoke would slowly obscure the colors.

Although a small panel of the *Madonna and Child* by Duccio di Buoninsegna (fig. 1.14) shows some damage, the surface seems to be well preserved and demonstrates the unusual skin tones found when early Italian painting was under the profound influence of Byzantine art, as will be discussed in Chapter 2. The frame is original, which is exceptional in a work of this age. The damage along the lower edge was caused by burning candles when the work was used for personal devotion in the home, monastery, or nunnery.



1.14. DUCCIO DI BUONINSEGNA. *Madonna and Child.*
c. 1300. Tempera and gold on wood, with original frame, 11 × 8"
(27.9 × 20.3 cm). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase (2004.442).
This recent acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York joins an impressive collection of Italian Late Medieval and Renaissance paintings, as well as sculptures, small bronzes, and even an *intarsia* studio (see figs. 14.31–14.32 for a similar example). The Metropolitan Museum is among the world's most impressive because its collections include works of high quality from virtually all periods of world history.

**CREATING A FRESCO PAINTING.** Altarpieces forced painters to work with meticulous care in tempera over months and even, for larger works such as Duccio's *Maestà* (see figs. 4.2–4.11), years, but in the medium of fresco they were required to work more quickly. According to Cennini, who described standard procedures probably practiced by Giotto and his followers, fresco (the Italian word means "fresh") was the most delightful technique, probably because the painter could pour out ideas with immediacy, vivacity, and intensity. A fresco may appear detailed when viewed from the floor, but when examined closely, it becomes apparent that it was executed at considerable speed. Most Italian fresco painters could manage an approximately life-sized figure in two days—one for the head and shoulders, the second for the rest. Counting an additional day for the background architecture or landscape, one can devise a rule of thumb that calculates the amount of time involved in painting a fresco by multiplying the number of foreground figures by three days. Some painters, such as Masaccio, who finished the *Expulsion* at the Brancacci Chapel in Florence in only four days, worked even faster (see figs. 8.7, 8.13–8.14). Michelangelo's painting of the *Creation of Sun, Moon, and Plants* on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling (see fig. 17.34) was completed in seven days.

In creating a fresco (fig. 1.15), the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century painter seems to have painted directly on the wall without preparatory drawings on paper beyond the kind needed for painting on a panel. But if the subject were unusual, requiring new compositional inventions or perhaps prior approval of the patron, more detailed drawings may have been made. The painter, standing on scaffolding (see fig. 1.12), probably drew rapidly on a wall whose masonry had been covered with a rough coat of plaster called *arriccio*. On this surface the painter could lay out the principal divisions of the area to be painted with the aid of vertical and horizontal lines created by snapping a long cord suffused with chalk against the wall; assistants held the cord at either end. Artists interested in establishing recession in perspective would apply the same technique, using a string tied to a nail for the vanishing point (for an example in which the nail hole is still visible using binoculars, see fig. 13.36). Then, with or without the aid of preliminary sketches, the painter drew the composition rapidly with a brush dipped into pale, watery earth color that would leave only faint marks.

Over these first indications, the painter could draw the rough outlines of the figures lightly with a stick of charcoal, further establishing the poses and principal masses of drapery. The third stage was a reddish monochromatic painting called a *sinopia* (pl. *sinopie*), after the name of the Greek city Sinope in Asia Minor, the source of the finest
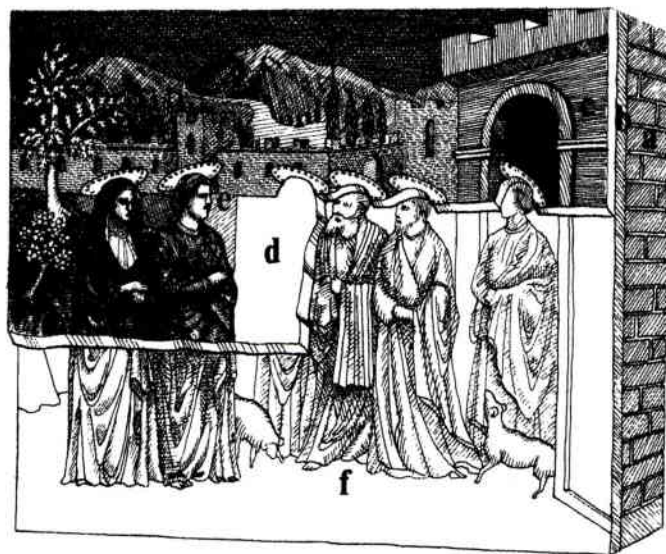


1.15. Diagram of a partially finished fresco at the beginning of a day's work, with joints between previous days' work indicated in heavy lines. a. masonry wall; b. *arriccio*; c. painted *intonaco* of upper tier; d. *giornata* of new *intonaco* ready for color; e. previous day's *giornata*; f. underdrawing in *sinopia* on *arriccio* layer.

red-earth color. In these *sinopie*, artists established musculature, features, and ornament, sometimes with the broad strokes of a coarse-bristle brush, sometimes with shorter, finer strokes.

In the process of detaching frescoes threatened by dampness or other problems from the walls on which they were painted, some *sinopie* have been brought to light (fig. 1.16; fig. 1.17 shows the completed fresco for comparison). In their freshness and freedom, *sinopie* are sometimes more attractive to modern eyes than the finished frescoes that covered them. If a *sinopia* varies considerably from its fresco, this may be because the painter decided to change the position of a limb or a piece of drapery, or perhaps because the patron complained about some iconographic or compositional aspect of the original design.

As the work progressed, the artist or an assistant covered a section of *sinopia* each morning (or the previous evening) with an area of fresh, smooth plaster called *intonaco*, leaving the painter with nothing but a memory— or some good working drawings—as a guide to paint that area. Each new patch of *intonaco* is called a *giornata* (pl. *giornate*). On any given day, a fresco in progress would consist of an area of finished work, an area of *sinopia*, and one blank *giornata* of fresh *intonaco* that had to be painted before the plaster became too dry late in the afternoon. The joints between *giornate* are often visible because the painter removed with a knife whatever *intonaco* remained unpainted when the light failed. The edge was beveled to

keep from crumbling. When the new *giornata* was applied that evening or the next morning, a soft, rounded edge adjoined the bevel. Specialists examining a fresco's surface on scaffolding can often determine not only the limits of each *giornata*, but also the order in which they were completed. Sometimes the divisions between the *giornate* follow the contours of a head or figure, but more frequently they fall between two figures or heads. An entry in the diary of the sixteenth-century painter Jacopo Pontormo illuminates the process, listing briefly what he accomplished each day and, on occasion, what he ate:

30th Tuesday I started the figure

Wednesday as far as the leg

On the first of August I did the leg, and at night I had supper with Piero, a pair of boiled pigeons.

Friday I did the arm that leans

Saturday the head of the figure that's below that's like this [accompanied by a drawing]

Sunday I had supper at Danielle's with Bron, we had meatballs.
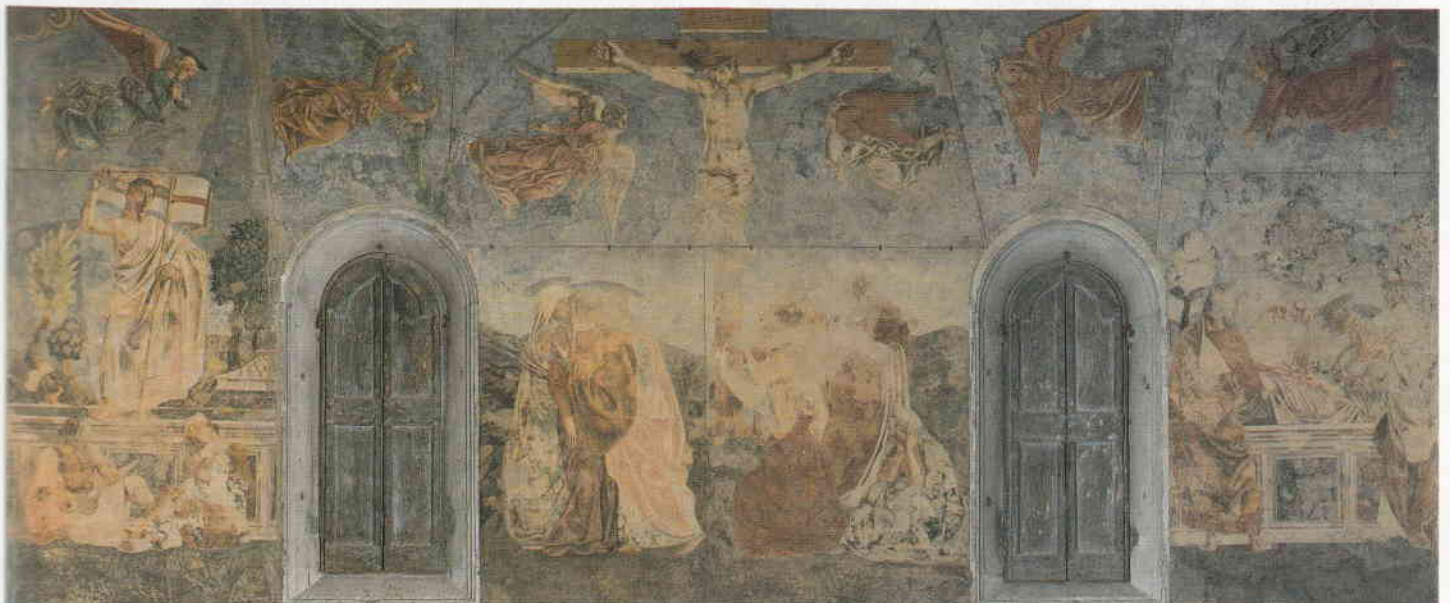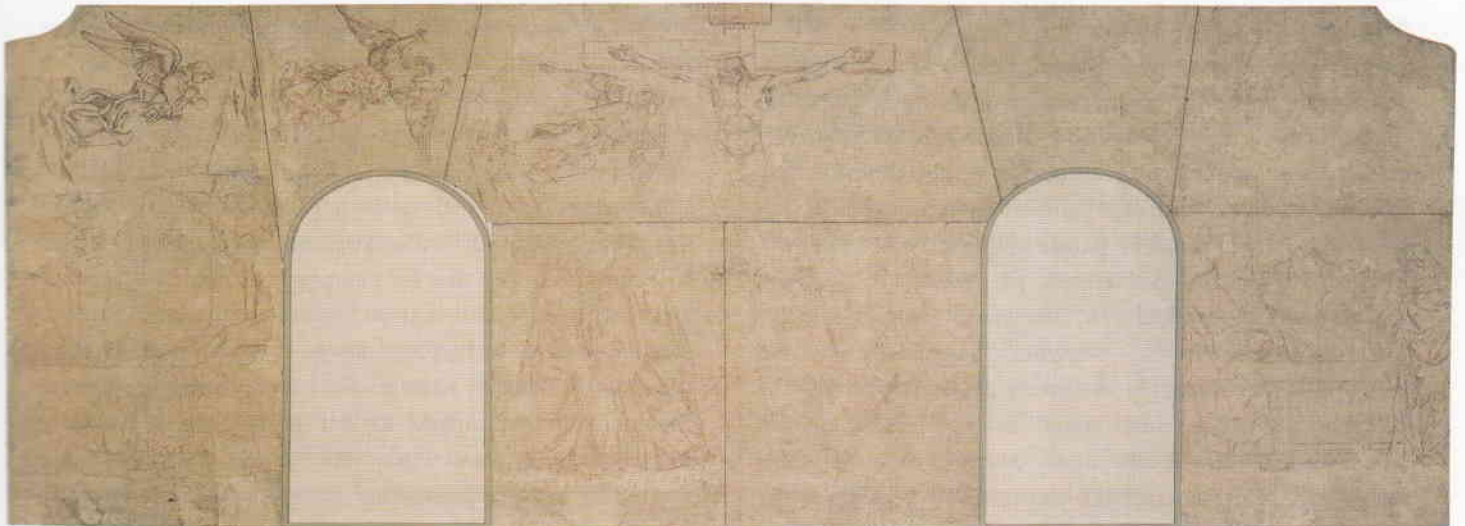




1.16, 1.17. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO. *Resurrection, Crucifixion, Entombment.* 1447. *Sinopia* drawing for fresco (top) and finished fresco (above), width of wall 39'6" (10.25 m). See fig. 11.1 for complete view of refectory wall of Refectory of Sant'Apollonia, Florence.

The pigments were mixed with water, and in the course of painting would sink into the fresh *intonaco*. At this point a chemical reaction took place: the carbon dioxide of the air combined with the calcium hydrate in the plaster, producing calcium carbonate as the plaster hardened. This technique is known as true fresco. When dry, fresco colors did not look the same as when they were first laid down on the wet plaster and the quality and luminosity of color depended on exactly how dry the plaster was when the painter applied that color. The painter also had to consider the humidity of the interior of the church or palace; frescoes could not be painted in cold weather in unheated interiors. Not all colors were water-soluble, and some had to be painted on the dry plaster—a procedure known as *a secco*. Areas of *a secco* were, sooner or later, in danger of peeling off.

Fresco painters worked from the top down to keep paint from dripping onto completed sections. The scaffolding was dismantled as lower levels were painted. The result was a tendency to compose in horizontal strips. The background landscape and architecture and sometimes the haloes would be painted before the heads of the foreground figures. Sometimes the painter started in the center and worked out, sometimes from the sides toward the center. The piecemeal nature in which a fresco had to be painted became a drawback during the fifteenth century, when visual unity, including light and atmosphere, was considered essential to good painting. Perhaps true fresco's limitations explain why Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* (see figs. 16.23–16.25) was not painted using this technique. Scaffolding prevented a painter from stepping back to view the whole, but occasionally an impulsive artist went over the edge and was injured, as was Michelangelo when painting the *Last Judgment* on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel (see fig. 20.1). According to Vasari, a painter named Barna da Siena was killed in such a fall. When faced with a deadline, some masters did a great deal of *a secco* painting over fresco underpainting.

Cennini's testimony suggests that before the fifteenth century painters did not make preparatory drawings but drew directly on the *intonaco* in *sinopia*. Conservation work, however, has shown that a number of fourteenth-century fresco cycles, including some by Giotto in Florence (see figs. 3.20–3.23), had no *sinopie* under the *intonaco*. It seems that it would have been useless to create detailed *sinopie* for large frescoes like those in figures 3.1, 4.30, 4.37, and 5.1, because the beams and boards of the scaffolding would have concealed any view of the whole from the floor. For such colossal paintings, detailed preparatory plans would have been indispensable. Any preparatory drawings actually used in painting a fresco would have been exposed to damage on the scaffolding and few survive. *Spolveri* gradually replaced *sinopie*, although in the middle of the fifteenth century both were sometimes used in the creation of a single fresco.

The *spolvero* and later the cartoon (perhaps cut into sections if too large to be easily manageable) were brought onto the scaffolding and the outlines transferred either by pouncing or by incising with a stylus in the case of the cartoon as each section of *intonaco* went on the wall. The painter was then free to lay on colors without having to remember the composition of a hidden section of *sinopia* under the *intonaco*, and with the *spolvero* or cartoon still at hand for guidance. Even with these techniques, however, evidence reveals that painters often varied from the contours they had pounced or incised when they actually applied paint; Raphael's cartoon is missing three figures found in the finished fresco (see figs. 17.47–17.48).

CREATING AN OIL PAINTING. Because oil paint did not become important in Italy until the late fifteenth century, we will delay a more detailed discussion until it begins to affect the appearance of paintings. It will suffice to point out that oil painting was first developed in northern Europe and that Italian collectors, including the Medici, owned early paintings in this technique. Italian patrons sometimes commissioned oil paintings from Northern artists, and the arrival in Florence in the early 1480s of one of these works (see fig. 13.32) helped direct Florentine painters' attention to the possibilities of the oil technique.

The same powdered pigments used in tempera painting were used for works in oil, the only difference being that the pigments were mixed with linseed oil instead of egg yolk. Oil offered several advantages: first, because it was slower-drying than tempera, it was easier to blend colors, leading to the possibility of greater detail; second, the thickness of the paint depended on how much linseed oil was added, meaning that the painter could have a very thin liquid or a thick one, according to need; third, oil is a translucent medium, so oil paintings could have a greater depth and richness of color than was possible with tempera. The earliest Italian works executed largely in oil were painted on the same kind of gessoed wooden support used for tempera painting but, because of the problems with humidity in Venice, Venetian painters eventually began painting on a canvas support.

Leonardo da Vinci was among the first Italian artists to use oil extensively (see p. 452), but it was Antonello da Messina (see pp. 412–15), who had studied with one or more Flemish artists, who brought the technique to Venice, where it had an almost immediate impact on Giovanni Bellini and others (see p. 418). The innovations in oil

painting made by the later Venetian painters—especially Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese—transformed the history of artistic development (see pp. 592–637). The Venetian technique of oil on canvas would dominate European painting well into the twentieth century.

# The Practice of Sculpture

The stone sculpture created in Italy during the Renaissance was in most cases made from blocks of marble quarried in the mountains near Carrara, near Pisa (fig. 1.18). While ready access to such a fine material was a definite advantage to sculptors, moving large blocks of stone down from the mountains was difficult and placed limits on the size of the blocks that could be transported. Michelangelo's *David* (see fig. 16.1) was carved from one of the largest blocks quarried during the Renaissance, at least 17 feet tall and relatively broad, but also quite shallow, which helps explain why the movement of Michelangelo's figure is largely two-dimensional. In his later works, when deeper blocks quarried to his specifications were available to him, Michelangelo created figures that twisted in space (see figs. 16.41, 18.16).

One fourteenth-century relief depicts a sculptor (see fig. 1.11) at work on a statue. The figure being carved does not stand vertically, as it will when completed, but in the most convenient position for carving—reclining at a diagonal; the same position is evident in a print showing a sculptor at work on a female bust portrait (see fig. 1.12). Even as late as the sixteenth century, Michelangelo worked on some of his statues in this manner—a method that both permitted the sculptor to approach every section easily without climbing and gave every hammer blow the benefit of gravity.

Sculptors might have begun a project by drawing and/or making small models in clay or even a full-sized version in clay or plaster. A complex device composed of adjustable iron rods could be used to enlarge (in the case of a small model) or transfer (in the case of a full-scale model) the model to the block. The outlines of the subject could also be sketched in charcoal on the surfaces of the block, from which the sculptor would then begin to carve away, first with a pointed and then with a toothed chisel. Assistants in the *bottega* may have completed the initial carving away of excess material from the block. The parallel marks left by the toothed chisel were removed with files and the surface was then polished with pumice and straw. In the case of Michelangelo's unfinished works (see figs. 16.41, 18.16, 20.16–20.17), we are able to study both the rough surface of the figures and the final surface polish that Michelangelo intended. The word "sculptor," incidentally, did not come into common use until the late fifteenth century; older documents use the term *tagliapietra* (stonecutter).

A bronze sculpture cost approximately ten times as much as a marble one. Bronze sculptures were made by pouring the bronze, a mixture of copper and tin (and, sometimes, lead, zinc, and/or pewter), heated to a temperature of at least 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit (about 1,000 degrees centigrade), into a mold. Sculptors were generally their own bronze founders, but for large or complex jobs, specialists in bronze casting such as bell-makers or artillery specialists may have assisted them.

To create a small, solid bronze figure or object, a detailed wax model was made or a rough clay core, covered with a thin layer of wax in which more specific details had been defined. The wax was then covered with a heat-resistant outer layer of plaster and sand or



1.18. View of the marble quarries near Carrara, Tuscany. In 1518, Michelangelo was sent to Carrara by Pope Leo X with orders to quarry marble from Monte Altissimo (the name means "the highest"), which was reported to have the finest marble in this area. Between 1518 and 1520 the sculptor had to concentrate on opening two roads, one that would lead up to the finest veins and a second that would enable the marble to be moved down the mountain to a port on the coast. More recently, dynamite and modern technology have been used to access Monte Altissimo's veins of fine marble.

clay. Heat was then applied to melt away the wax, leaving a mold into which molten bronze was poured. After the mold was removed, the surface of the solid bronze casting was cleaned and details refined with metal tools (see below).

The initial step in creating a larger work began with the artist's production of a full-scale clay model, around which a plaster mold would be constructed that could be removed in sections so that smaller units could be cast separately and later joined by soldering (fig. 1.19). These sections were coated inside with a layer of wax. Separately, a core of clay and shavings was built on a framework of iron to provide support during the casting process. The thin wax coating was then removed from the plaster mold and fixed to the core with wires to make a statue of wax around the core. This wax statue was then brushed with a paste made of fine ash mixed with water, and around it was made an exterior mold of clay and shavings supported by an iron framework pinned and joined to that of the core. Tubes called sprues allowed the wax to pass through the outer mold. When this construction was heated, the wax ran out, leaving the space between core and outer mold for the melted bronze, which could be poured in through several sprues simultaneously, as shown in figure 1.19, or passed through pipes from a furnace. For very large pieces, sometimes the mold was placed in a pit in the earth to make it easier for the heavy, hot metal to be poured into the sprues prepared for it.

After the bronze had cooled, both core and mold could be chipped away, leaving a series of pieces that could be joined together to form a hollow bronze statue. The sprues were then cut away. If the cast had holes because the molten bronze had failed to flow freely, these could be repaired (such patches are visible on the legs of Donatello's *David*, for example; see fig. 10.22), and complex protrusions could be cast separately and attached at this point. The rough surfaces of the bronze were then filed away and polished by a process known as chasing, and details such as strands of hair and the decorative edging of garments would be refined by scratching into or incising the bronze. The technique described here is similar to that used by the ancient Greeks and Romans.

The sculpture could be left in its natural bronze state, but sometimes details or even the whole were gilded. This was an elaborate process: details could be gilded by a means similar to that used for panels, but larger areas were usually fire-gilt. This technique required the application of an alloy of gold and mercury; when heated, the mercury was dispersed, leaving the sculpture covered with a thin but durable coating of gold. Such a process is now known to be dangerous because of the poisonous nature of mercury.
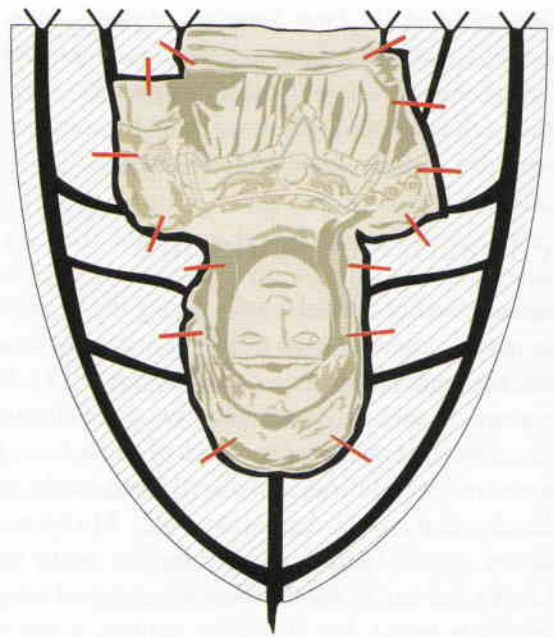


1.19. Conjectural reconstruction of a cross-section of the bronze casting process for the head, bust, and upper arms of the figure of Judith from Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* (see fig. 12.7). The beige areas in the center indicate the form of the piece to be cast. The hatched areas are the outer mold for the piece, and the red lines are the metal pins that hold the inner mold to the outer one after the wax has been melted out. The black arrows at the top and black areas suggest how the hot bronze would have flowed through the sprues and out at the bottom.

The difficulties of casting in bronze were described in dramatic detail by Benvenuto Cellini in his *Autobiography* (written 1558–1562). Although his writings contain a certain amount of exaggeration, Cellini's works demonstrate the high level of accomplishment possible in bronze sculpture by the late sixteenth century (see fig. 20.22).

## The Practice of Architecture

During the Renaissance, new buildings were built (or begun) and old ones remodeled. New city centers were in a few instances constructed (see figs. 10.10–10.11), while ideal cities, destined to remain dreams, were described in treatises or represented in drawings, prints, or paintings (see fig. 14.30). Whether built or envisioned, Renaissance structures consistently offered references to antiquity through the use of classical proportions and Roman orders, arches, and decoration. Squares that recall Roman forums were built, and direct imitations of Roman triumphal arches were created for the festivities of Renaissance sovereigns. Italian architects were inspired by the buildings of ancient Rome, some of which were visible in

a more complete state during the Renaissance than they are today (see fig. 12.19). In addition, a text on architecture by the first-century BCE architect and theorist Vitruvius survived and was carefully read not only by architects but also by humanists. The new classicizing buildings of the Renaissance were based on drawings of Roman structures, but in style could vary from exactly measured, archaeologically correct views to designs that added highly personal embellishments to the original model.

Italian architects before the High Renaissance, however, were little interested in the fundamentals of Roman imperial building, especially the system of vaulting used by the Romans to roof vast interior spaces. In comparison with the richly articulated architecture of masses and spaces developed during the Roman Empire, continued at Ravenna, and—technically at least—surpassed in the Gothic cathedrals of France and other northern European countries, Italian architecture of the late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance remained, essentially, an architecture of large spaces enclosed by flat walls. In fact, the word used by Renaissance architects, patrons, and theorists for "to build" was *murare* (literally "to wall"), and in Italy a builder is still a *muratore*. Often these Italian structures were roofed by the same simple timber constructions used in Early Christian basilicas, with a flat, wooden ceiling suspended from the beams (see figs. 6.17–6.18). Even when constructing a vault, the Italian architect was averse to the rich system of supports—the so-called exoskeleton—of a French Gothic church with its flying buttresses and pinnacles. The massive masonry vaults of the cathedrals of Florence and Siena, for example, would have collapsed without the iron tie-rods that helped to hold the structure together (see figs. 2.38 and 5.15, where the tie-rods are clearly visible).

It seems that when the builders of Italian churches in the early part of our period laid out the foundations of their structures, they were often not exactly certain how high the walls and columns were to reach or how the interior spaces were to be vaulted. The calculation of spaces and forms was based on mathematical principles of sequence and proportion (see p. 154) rather than on any notion of the requirements of day-to-day living. The surviving drawings of architectural plans, elevations, perspectives, and details (see figs. 3.24, 16.8, 17.13, 18.2) take on a special importance when, as often happened, the building itself was never built (see fig. 6.20). In addition, the backgrounds of paintings sometimes offer views of architecture, although some of these painted structures are clearly unbuildable (see figs. 14.16, 16.44). Sadly, the dreams of most Renaissance architects for the rebuilding of Italian cities were prevented by circumstance—war, internal conflict, lack of funds—from being realized (see figs. 14.30, 15.61).

Although work was sometimes carried out under the general direction of an architect, often the key figure was a mason or builder—a member of the Arte di Pietra e Legname. Rarely, however, did such a technician rise to the status of architect. There was, in fact, no word for architect in the fourteenth century, only *capomaestro* (literally "head-master"). Almost all the most inventive architects discussed here began as painters, sculptors, or, in the case of Michelangelo, both; some came to architecture late and—impressive as their architectural achievements were—continued to paint or sculpt. Often they were appointed *capomaestro* without training or experience in building. The modern institution of an architectural office was unknown in the Renaissance, and the principal method of communication between architect and builder was a detailed wooden model, a number of which survive (see figs. 18.3, 20.8, 20.11). Military architecture was given over to untrained builders, who made themselves into expert engineers, and the beauty, brilliance, and practicality of Renaissance fortifications deserves further study.

The construction of a large building demanded extensive scaffolding. In the early period the temporary platforms on which the workers stood were often supported by beams inserted into square holes left in the structure for just this purpose; you can see such scaffolding in use at the top of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Allegory of Good Government in the City* (see fig. 4.30). As the wall rose in height, the beams would be raised, and the holes left open so that repairing the structure could be accomplished without rebuilding scaffolding from the ground. These holes are still visible in some medieval structures. The wall, freestanding with a minimum of external buttressing or none at all, was the basis of Italian architectural thinking until it was replaced in the High Renaissance by the development of the radial plan, in which large interior spaces radiated out from a central, domed core (see, for example, figs. 17.11–17.15, 20.9).

Often the façade of an Italian church or palace seems to have little to do with the building behind it, and the side walls stand without articulation, flat and relatively untreated (see fig. 2.27). The façade was not considered an essential part of the structure but was, rather, a ceremonial decoration for the piazza before it, like the shrines still erected in south Italian streets to celebrate the festival of a saint. The façade sometimes does not even have the same number of stories as the building behind it, and it may tower far above, supported from behind by iron rods fastened to the roof beams. It is sometimes even lower than the bulk of the actual building.

In a sense, the wall is the beginning and the end of much of Italian architecture, and it forms as well a broad field for fresco painting and a background for altarpieces and

sculpture. The wall is the plane from which perspective thinking starts and new, harmonious spaces are created in a world projected beyond its surface, into which the observer is visually invited to step (see figs. 13.34–13.37). The wall is the screen on which, in a series of brilliant frescoes painted during this period, Italian civic life and the Italian landscape are preserved through the fertility of the Italian imagination.

## Printmaking in the Renaissance

The arts of sculpture and architecture as practiced in the Renaissance were largely commissioned by and paid for by elite members of society; while modestly priced paintings are documented during this period, few examples survive. Prints made from wooden blocks or copper plates on paper, however, could be mass produced and were therefore available to a broader spectrum of society. Such prints were used to illustrate books and pamphlets (see fig. 13.28) or as independent images (see fig. 8.22). The more modest of these works are usually anonymous, but in other cases the artists are known (see figs. 13.5, 17.60) or the works can be attributed to specific individuals. Some prints reproduce works of art and help to explain how contemporary and later artists knew about famous paintings and sculptures that they had never seen (see figs. 16.26, 17.60). Others, such as a print after a design by Parmigianino (see fig. 18.52), are demonstrations of technical proficiency—yet another indication of how Renaissance artists desired to impress viewers with their skill.

The two most common printmaking techniques used during our period are engraving and the woodblock print. For the former, a special pointed tool known as a burin was used to scratch sharp grooves into a copper plate. In a few cases artists experimented with a drypoint needle, which created raised metal, known as the burr, on either side of the groove; while this created a certain soft and possibly atmospheric effect, the burr wore away quickly when the plate was printed. When completed, the engraved plate was covered with thick black ink and the excess wiped away, leaving the ink in the grooves. When a piece of slightly moistened paper was placed on the inked copperplate and paper and plate were run through a printing press (or rubbed by hand), the ink in the grooves was transferred to the paper, which was then dried. To create a woodblock print, a chisel was used to cut away the surface in those parts of the design that were to be left neutral, leaving raised surfaces that were then inked. Moist paper was then applied and block and paper run through a press or rubbed by hand. The paper was then lifted from the block and dried. The two techniques offer different effects: in an engraving the forms are defined by line, while in a

woodblock print the image is established through bold black or colored patterns against the neutral ground. The more complex technique of *chiaroscuro* woodblock printing, which required several woodblocks, is discussed on p. 580.

The woodblock print illustrated in figure 13.28 was included in a pamphlet—part of the publishing explosion that occurred in the fifteenth century. The use of moveable metal type was pioneered by the German goldsmith and printer Johannes Gutenberg, whose famous Bible was published in 1455. This technique rapidly changed the production of books, and the publishing of books and pamphlets expanded exponentially in subsequent centuries. Presses had been established in Rome by 1467, Venice by 1469, and Florence by 1471. By the end of the fifteenth century, books were being published in more than seventy Italian cities and towns. Wealthy families built up book collections during the Renaissance and new structures intended as libraries were constructed (see figs. 6.27, 18.12).

## The Practice of History

Before proceeding with our examination of Renaissance art, another kind of practice needs to be discussed: that of history. The idea that history was worthy of study for its own sake was a new phenomenon in the Renaissance. While medieval theologians had defined the world of the past and the present within the context of Christian goals and institutions, Renaissance humanists defied these narrow parameters, analyzing and assessing historical evidence in search of answers that were not dependent on the doctrines promulgated by the Church. They were inspired in this research by the historical approach that they noted in the works of ancient historians.

When Lionardo Bruni (see fig. 10.27), humanist chancellor of Florence, wrote his *History of the Florentine People* (published in 1444 by the Florentine Signoria), he researched his subject, consulted historical documents, and developed theories that placed Florence's background within a larger historical context. He argued, for example, that Florence must have been founded during the Roman Republic, relating it to what he knew of Greek political practice and calling it "the new Athens on the Arno."

In recent decades scholars have grown increasingly interested in historiography: the history and analysis of writing history. No historian is a mere compiler of facts. Even the choice of facts to include can be an indication of bias, and in this the Renaissance was no exception. In a peninsula dominated by autocratic rulers in other centers, for example, it was important for Bruni to emphasize that Florence was founded not in the ancient Roman Imperial period but in the Republican period, just as it was

important for Renaissance Florentines to believe that their Baptistery (see fig. 2.33) had been an ancient Roman temple to Mars. Keeping this in mind, we can turn briefly to the first historian of Italian art, Giorgio Vasari.

## The Practice of Art History: Giorgio Vasari

The name that will appear more often than any other in this book is that of Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), the first historian of Italian Renaissance art. The writer's family name, Vasari, is derived from *vasaio*, "vase," suggesting that an ancestor had been a potter, and we know that Vasari came from a family of artisans. Although he had a distinguished career as a painter and architect (see figs. 20.40–20.43), he is best known for his work as a historian and critic. In 1550, Vasari published the first edition of his *Lives of the Best Architects, Painters, and Sculptors …* (*Le vite de più eccellenti architetti, pittori, e scultori …* ). This two-volume work was more than 1,000 pages long and featured biographies of 133 artists as well as brief mentions of many others. The second, three-volume edition (1564–68) of the *Lives* ran to about 1,500 pages and included new information that Vasari had collected through correspondence, research, and travel, as well as discussion of such new categories of art as the temporary decorations for weddings, triumphal entries, funerals, and the many other pageants that played a role in Renaissance life. This edition also had woodcut portraits of many artists.

Vasari established a number of approaches that continue to influence the writing of art history, for better or—as some critics would argue—for worse. He organized his work around the individual artist in terms of biography, character, and style. In many cases, he suggested that the personality of the artist could be used to elucidate the works he or she created. In addition, he evaluated the art, distinguishing some artists and works as superlative. Vasari also recognized that artists must be understood in terms of the period in which they lived and worked. When Frederick Hartt completed the first edition of this book in 1969, he followed Vasari's precedent. As an artist himself, Vasari was well aware of the sometimes difficult and demanding role a patron could play in the creation of a work of art, and in the *Lives* he emphasizes the importance of patrons. In this seventh edition of Hartt's book, the names of patrons are given in captions as a reminder of their essential role in the creation of many works of Renaissance art.

Vasari explained the development of Renaissance art in terms of a trajectory. The concept of historical development or progress that he presented was derived from the writings of ancient authors. While he found little of interest in earlier Italian medieval art, Vasari argued that a revival of art, based on a new interest in imitating nature, had emerged in Tuscany in the works of Giotto and other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century artists. This first phase was followed in the fifteenth century by Vasari's second phase in which, to quote the author, "all things are done better, with more invention and design, with a more beautiful style and greater industry." The culmination that Vasari found in his third and final stage was, he argued, made possible by the discovery and study of ancient sculptures (see figs. 1.4–1.6, 17.3–17.4). Vasari pointed out that this final phase was exemplified in the works of Michelangelo.

The biases that Vasari brought to his task were many, however. While the artists of Florence were certainly the leaders in many Renaissance developments and deserve a special role in any history of Italian Renaissance art, the pre-eminence that Vasari granted Florentine art was exaggerated. He dedicated his volumes to Cosimo I de' Medici, and throughout the biographies he privileged the role of the Medici family in commissioning and collecting works of art. Vasari's *Lives* was intended to inform a broad segment of the educated public about art, and it had a wide and immediate circulation; responses to his comments on German art, for example, were being written by German writers as early as 1573. Several authors in Italy and other European countries were inspired to write their own versions of the *Lives*. Vasari's work continues to be a crucial source of information and ideas.

In addition to his role as artist and author, Vasari was one of the first collectors of drawings. In the *Lives*, he pointed out that preliminary sketches were the initial expression of the artistic idea, and he cited drawings in his own collection that demonstrated a specific artist's personal style and/or method. Vasari compiled his drawings into volumes, mounting them on large pieces of paper and enframing them with architectural and sculptural motifs drawn in his own style (fig. 1.20). Sometimes he would incorporate into this elegant presentation the woodcut portrait of the artist taken from the *Lives*. In the example illustrated here, Vasari's frame features the broken pediment popular in sixteenth-century art and architecture (see figs. 18.11, 19.27), and a reclining muscular figure inspired by Michelangelo. By collecting drawings, Vasari was emphasizing that everything an artist did, even a drawing made in preparation for a larger work, as in this example, was precious and should be preserved.

Vasari's comments will often be quoted or mentioned in this book. Because he knew personally many of the sixteenth-century artists about whom he wrote, because he so

often mentions the diligence with which he undertook his task, and because he lived in a period much closer to the developments of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries than we do, it is tempting to accept everything that he has written. But, while many of his facts can be validated through other evidence, some have been found to be incorrect (see p. 271). His sources were often incomplete or inaccurate, and some of his contacts may not have told him the truth. In general he is weaker on the development of Renaissance art outside of the city of Florence than he is on the events of his hometown. Vasari's personalized history of Italian Renaissance art must be read, like all histories, with an understanding of his cultural background and motivations in mind. Despite his flaws, however, Vasari is our earliest and most provocative source on the development of a beloved tradition of art.



1.20. PIETRO PERUGINO. *Head of a Man with a Long Beard.* c. 1494. Drawing in silverpoint and pen on brown-prepared paper, heightened with white and in a mount by Giorgio Vasari, $10^3/4 \times 7"$ ($24.7 \times 17.9$ cm). British Museum, London. Vasari's book of drawings was ultimately taken apart and the drawings scattered in various collections. In some cases Vasari's frames were lost or damaged. In this example, only the upper part of the frame survived; the lower part is a restoration. For works by Perugino, see figs. 14.16–14.20.

PART ONE

# THE LATE MIDDLE AGES
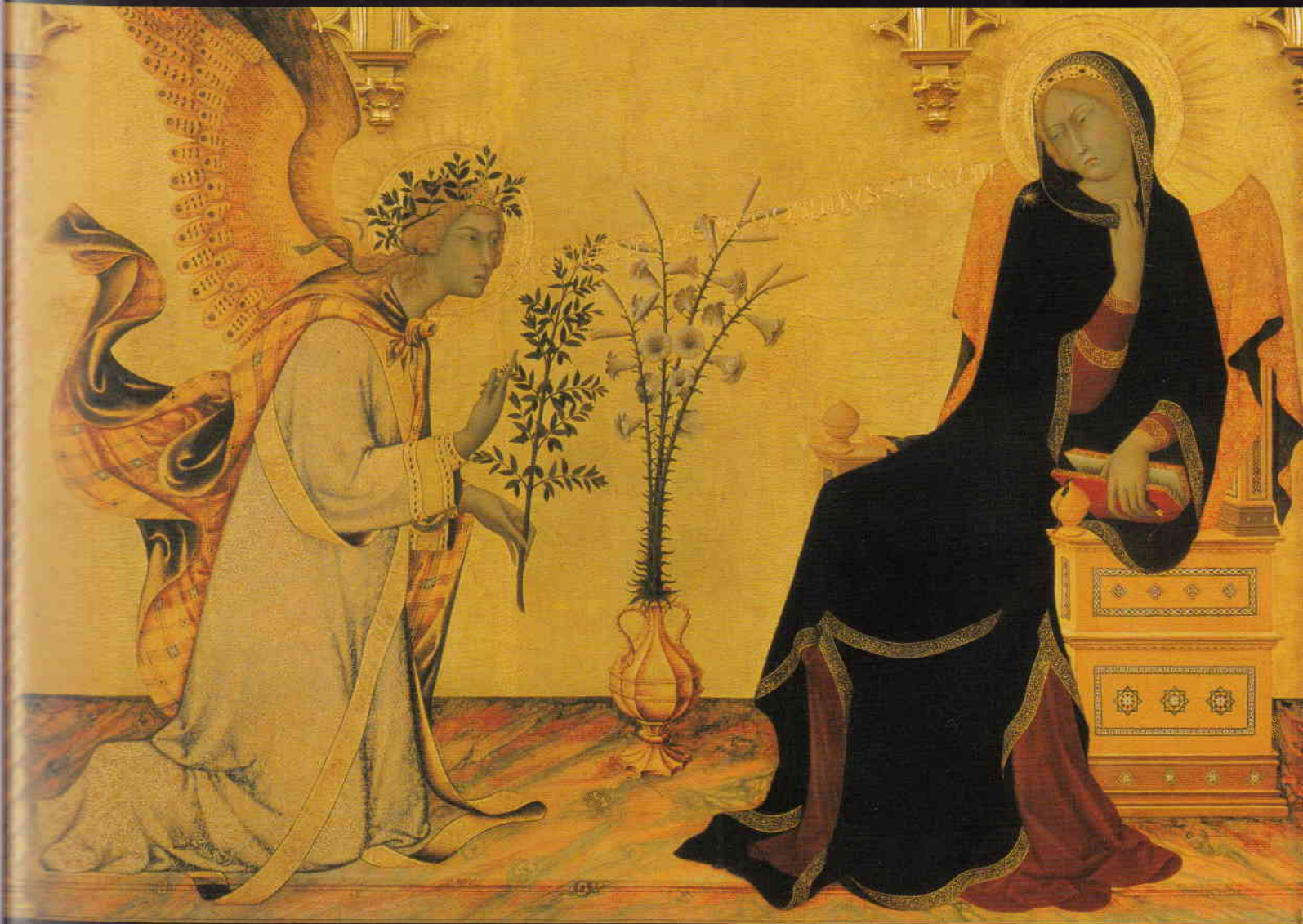
# DUECENTO ART IN TUSCANY
# AND ROME

The first manifestations of a new style in painting and sculpture seem to have taken place in Tuscany. This region in central Italy between the Apennines and the Mediterranean corresponds roughly to an area that was inhabited in ancient times by the Etruscans, from whom the medieval Tuscans were in part descended and from whom the name Tuscany is derived. Shortly after 1100, this region became the scene of new political developments when the cities of Pisa, Lucca, Pistoia, Prato, and Florence constituted themselves as free communes or republics. Liberated from control by the counts of Tuscany after the death of Countess Matilda in 1115, they owed a somewhat shadowy allegiance to either the Holy Roman Emperor or, in the case of Florence, the pope. On a day-to-day basis, however, these affiliations were often irrelevant. Siena also eventually established itself as an independent republic free from the domination of the bishop and neighboring feudal lords, while the success of Florentine commercial endeavors led to a growing spirit of independence among the city's citizens.

*Opposite:* 2.1. NICOLA PISANO. Pisa Baptistery pulpit. 1260. White Carrara marble, variegated red marble, polished granite, originally with inlaid and painted highlights, patterned glass, height approx. 15' (4.6 m). 🏛 Baptistery, Pisa. Commissioned by Archbishop Federigo Visconti. The inscription on the pulpit reads: "In the year 1260 Nicola Pisano carved this noble work. May so greatly gifted a hand be praised as it deserves."
This is one of many works of Italian art still located in the structures for which they were created. The original settings give these works an important sense of context that would be lost were they moved to a museum. To understand individual pieces, it is sometimes helpful to remember what other works were originally found in the same context.

Within these new Tuscan city-states a struggle for power developed between the merchant class and the old nobility, and in this conflict a premium was placed on the value and initiative of the individual. The new middle class that arose during the thirteenth century provided a rich market and a powerful incentive for the new art—an impulse encouraged by the transformation of personal and communal religious life during this period through the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) and St. Dominic (1170–1221) and the religious orders they founded.

The term Italians use to refer to the thirteenth century (the 1200s) is "Duecento," an abbreviation based on the term "Mille-duecento" (one thousand, two hundred). Trecento is used for the fourteenth century, Quattrocento for the fifteenth, and Cinquecento for the sixteenth. The qualities of Duecento painting came to be appreciated more fully in the twentieth century; thirteenth-century Italian art was influenced by Byzantine art—the painting of the highly developed Greek-speaking culture that flourished in Constantinople at this time—and the Italian variation on this tradition had previously been judged provincial and stagnant. According to Vasari, painters from the East (he called them "Greeks") had even been called to Florence, where Cimabue, whom Vasari considered the first truly Florentine painter, watched them work and then surpassed what Vasari called their "rude" manner. Vasari knew little, of course, about the intellectual and refined quality of later Byzantine painting, but there is a germ of truth in his story. Greek mosaicists had been called to the court of King Roger II of Sicily in the twelfth century (fig. 2.2), where they founded a new school of Italo-Byzantine art. Byzantine influence in thirteenth-century Europe is also in part explained by the Sack of Constantinople in 1204 by the Crusaders, who devastated the churches and the Great Palace. The artistic works taken by the Crusaders—painted icons, manuscripts, ivory carvings, enamels,
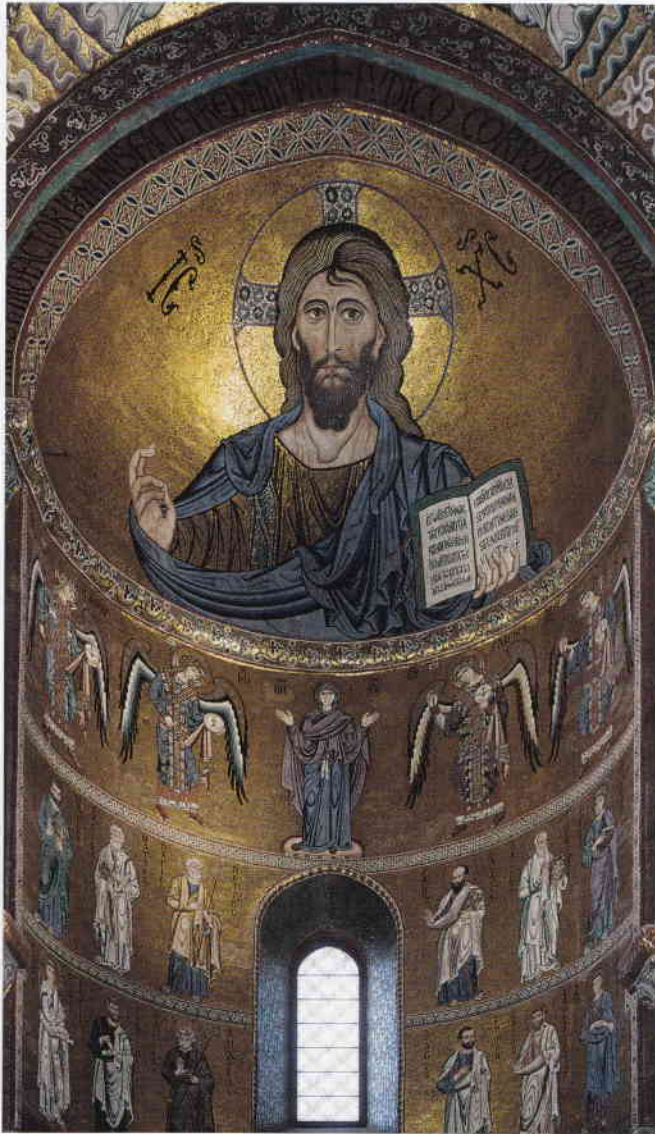
2.2. ITALO-BYZANTINE. *Christ Pantocrator, the Virgin Mary, Angels, Saints, and Prophets.* 1148. Apse mosaic. Cathedral, Cefalù, Sicily.

fabrics with woven pictures, liturgical vessels—were scattered throughout Europe, where their refined style and impressive craftsmanship inspired local artists.

Byzantine art impressed through its sophisticated style—featuring delicately posed, slender figures and vivid colors—and its rich materials, including gold, ivory, and enamel. Greek painters themselves, with few opportunities in Constantinople, may have been drawn by the wealth of Venice and the Tuscan cities. The earliest Italo-Byzantine paintings demonstrate Italian artists' reliance on Byzantine models, with the anatomy divided into clearly demarcated and delicately shaded areas and light on drapery rendered by means of parallel lines of color or gold. But these works also display a vigor and tension that distinguish them from the Eastern examples that inspired them.

## Painting in Pisa

So little is left of Tuscan painting before 1200 that it is impossible to reconstruct the course of its development, but the earliest surviving examples are in some ways closer to the art of Romanesque Europe than to that of the Byzantine East. Probably as a result of the conquest of Constantinople, however, Byzantine influence during the Duecento rapidly became dominant, as is evident in examples painted in Pisa, a powerful seaport since Roman times. In 1133, under Pope Innocent II, Pisa was briefly the seat of the papacy, and St. Bernard called it "a new Rome." The republic was in constant commercial competition and naval warfare with the rival ports of Genoa to the northwest and Amalfi, south of Naples.

One of the earliest surviving Italian panel pictures is the anonymous and undated *Cross No. 15*, which was probably made in Pisa (fig. 2.3). This large work, perhaps intended for a choir screen, shows Christ alive on the cross. Scenes from the Passion and subsequent events are placed on the areas to either side (known as the apron) and at the ends of the bars of the cross. A cross with a Christ who is represented alive is termed a *Christus triumphans* (Christ triumphant). The purpose of these crucifixes seems to have been to present an image of a powerful deity who
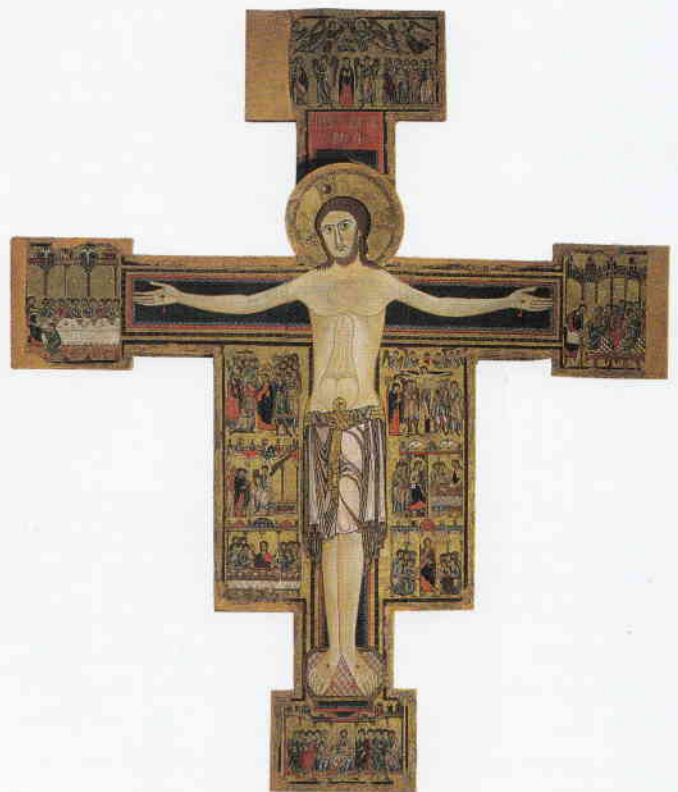


2.3. SCHOOL OF PISA. *Cross No. 15.* Late twelfth century. Panel, 9'3" × 7'9¾" (2.82 × 2.38 m). Pinacoteca, Pisa.

could overcome the torment of the Crucifixion. In the backgrounds of the scenes, the arches and columns recall the Romanesque architecture of Pisa's Cathedral, Baptistery, and Bell Tower—the famous Leaning Tower.

The palette of colors used by the artist—blue, rose, white, tan, gold—is simple, and the style, considering the potential drama of the subject, is restrained. Clear contours outline major elements, and the linear treatment of the drapery is related to that of contemporary Tuscan Romanesque sculpture. Christ's body is modeled with delicacy, as though carved in low relief. The wide-open eyes stare impassively outward. Against the elaborate architectural structures, the scenes from the Passion are represented as if they were incidents from a stylized ritual rather than events that happened to real people. All in all, the style recalls the manuscript painting of the Romanesque period in Italy more than anything Byzantine.

Compared to this rather static painting, *Cross No. 20*, also still in Pisa (fig. 2.4), conveys a range of emotional values. Christ is shown dead, and it was perhaps the direct appeal to the feelings of the spectator of this type, known as the *Christus patiens* (suffering Christ), that explains why it rapidly replaced the *Christus triumphans*. Again we know neither the date of the painting nor the identity of the artist, but it is evident that he was strongly influenced by Byzantine art. The pose of the body, with the hips



2.4. SCHOOL OF PISA. *Cross No. 20.* c. 1230. Parchment on panel, 9'9" × 7'8" (2.97 × 2.34 m). Pinacoteca, Pisa.

2.5. BYZANTINE. *Lamentation.* c. 1164. Fresco. St. Pantaleimon, Nerezi, near Skopje, Macedonia.

curving to our left, is common in Byzantine representations. By analogy with dated works, it is possible to suggest a date of about 1230.

The change in content and style between the two Pisan crosses can be partly explained by the spread of the devotional practices of St. Francis of Assisi. Francis preached and practiced a direct devotion to Christ and is said to have received the miracle of the stigmata—wounds in the hands, feet, and side that paralleled those of Christ at the Crucifixion. Although it is difficult to confirm a direct connection, it seems likely that the religious emotionalism of Francis and his followers, which was widely disseminated by the Franciscan Order, would have affected the interpretation and representation of religious subjects in art.

The new emotional content is evident throughout *Cross No. 20*: note Christ's sad expression and the drama evoked in the scenes from the Passion, in which architectural backgrounds are subordinated to human content. Everywhere the flow of line—in the hair and delicately delineated features, in the slender fingers, and in the composition of the scenes silhouetted against gold—achieves effects that are both expressive and decorative. In the *Lamentation* panel, long delicate lines move downward with increasing frequency through the angels' wings to Mary and the body of her son, which rests on her lap. This elegant group was derived from Byzantine sources. The subject of Mary holding the dead Christ on her lap as she had held him as a child is not found in the Bible, and it was apparently the tenth-century theologian Simeon Metaphrastes who first described this theme. As early as the twelfth century it was being represented in Byzantine art, as can be seen in a fresco of about 1164 at Nerezi (fig. 2.5); an icon with a similar representation may have migrated to Pisa. *Cross No. 20* is one of the earliest Italian examples of the representation of the tragic relationship between the dead Christ and his mother, which became an important subject for artists of the Renaissance. For the most famous example, by Michelangelo, see figures 16.37–16.38. By the late years of the Trecento, this theme was called the *Pietà* (Italian for both "piety" and "pity").

## Painting in Lucca

Similar stages may be discerned in the painting of Lucca, a rival republic about 15 miles from Pisa whose wealth was derived from banking activities. An altarpiece of *St. Francis with Scenes from his Life* (fig. 2.6) in Pescia, a town between Lucca and Pistoia, is signed by Bonaventura Berlinghieri, a member of a family of painters founded by his father, Berlinghiero Berlinghieri, who had come to Lucca from Milan. The work is dated 1235, only nine years after the death of St. Francis. Although it is the earliest known image of the saint, there is no evidence that Tuscans in the Duecento attached any importance to portrait likeness. We can, however, deduce from the intensity of the face, with its emaciated cheeks and piercing gaze, a great deal about the meaning of St. Francis's message to his contemporaries. Bonaventura has shown us an ascetic Francis of private meditations and ecstatic prayers.

The placement of scenes from the life of the saint to either side of the central figure was probably inspired by painted crosses. Two of the narrative scenes have land-

2.6. BONAVENTURA BERLINGHIERI. *St. Francis with Scenes from his Life.* 1235. Panel,
5' × 3'9¾" (1.52 × 1.16 m). 🏛 S. Francesco, Pescia.

scape backgrounds in which the Byzantine models for painting hills are schematized and simplified. At the same time, the color and shapes suggest a new interest in nature as a vital force, and the narratives demonstrate a new interest in human emotional reactions. There is, however, no attempt to represent natural space, and the architectural settings are adopted almost without change from Byzantine formulas; they show no relation to the Romanesque architecture of Lucca in Bonaventura's day.

## Painting in Florence

Until the Duecento, Pisa and Lucca were more populous and powerful than Florence, and Florentine painting seems to have had a slightly later start. But even its earliest examples show a greater power and plasticity than is found in the works of the two rival schools.

Coppo di Marcovaldo (active 1260s–70s), the first named Florentine painter, is generally accepted as the artist
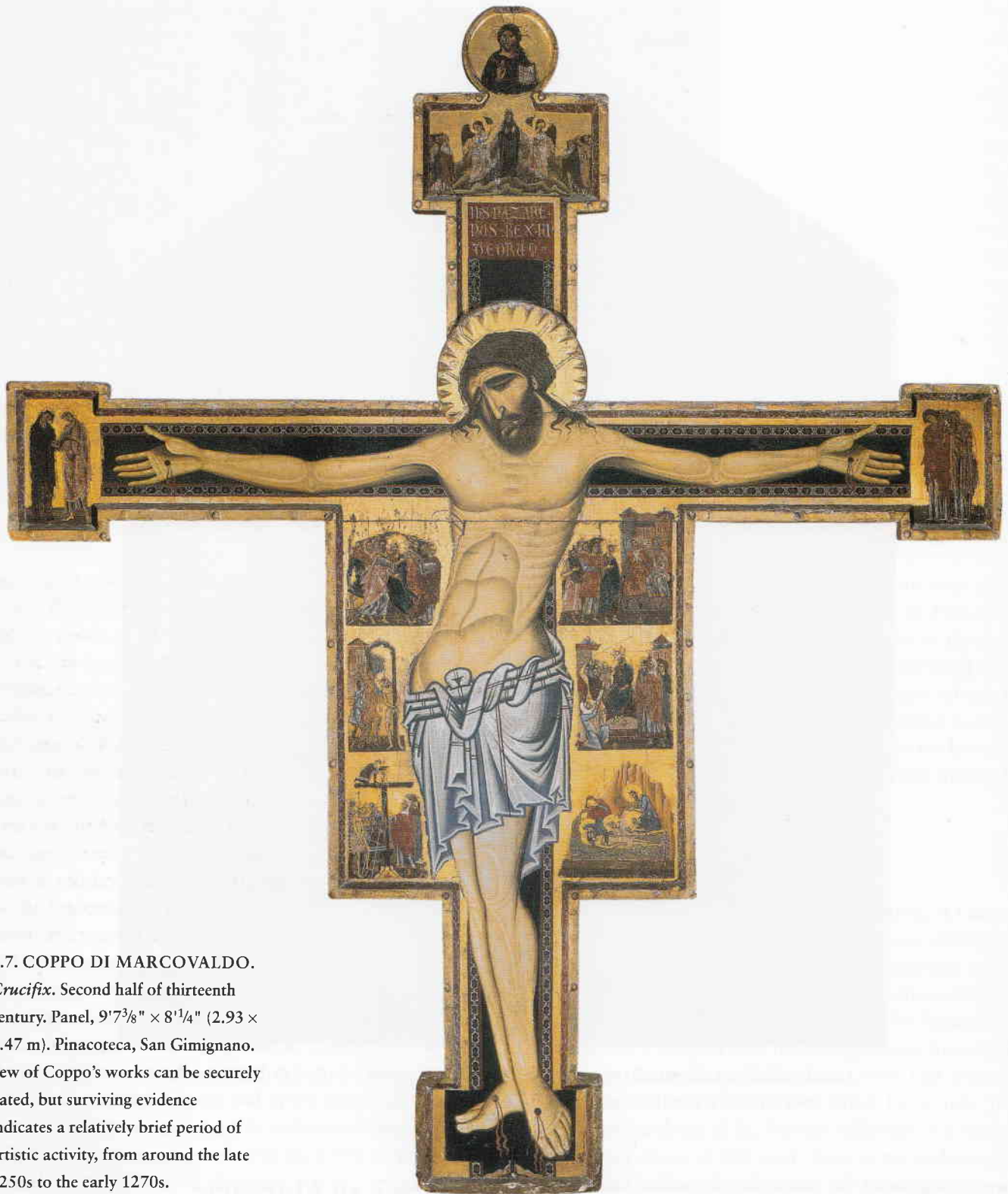
2.7. COPPO DI MARCOVALDO.
*Crucifix*. Second half of thirteenth
century. Panel, 9'7³⁄₈" × 8'1¹⁄₄" (2.93 ×
2.47 m). Pinacoteca, San Gimignano.
Few of Coppo's works can be securely
dated, but surviving evidence
indicates a relatively brief period of
artistic activity, from around the late
1250s to the early 1270s.

of the *Crucifix* (fig. 2.7) in San Gimignano, which was then in Sienese territory. Coppo, who was deeply influenced by the Byzantine style, shows us a Christ whose sculpted body and face are convulsed and distorted with suffering, and whose loincloth, hanging low at the waist, is broken into deep-set angles projected with a violence unusual in Italian art. The closed eyes are treated as two fierce, hooked slashes, while the mouth seems to quiver against the sweat-soaked locks of the beard and the hair seems to writhe like snakes against the tormented body.

Even the halo, carved into a raised disk broken by wedge-like indentations, plays a part in heightening the expressive power of the representation.

Coppo fought in the Battle of Montaperti in 1260 and was taken prisoner by the Sienese after the Florentine defeat; it has been suggested that the emotional content of his *Crucifix* reflects his wartime experiences. Compared with the *Lamentation* in *Cross No. 20*, Coppo's scene of the same subject suggests the immediacy of a family tragedy. Christ lies rigid on the ground, his head held by his mother; the other figures use gesture and glance to suggest strong emotion, and the landscape, with its dramatic verticals, adds further tension.

The subject of Coppo's *Madonna and Child* (fig. 2.8) does not allow the emotive outbursts sensed in the *Cruci-*



2.8. COPPO DI MARCOVALDO. *Madonna and Child.* c. 1265.
Panel, 7'9¾" × 4'5⅛" (2.38 × 1.35 m). S. Martino dei Servi, Orvieto.

*fix*, but the artist's intensity of feeling is evident in the form and design. Coppo follows traditional Byzantine representations in showing the Virgin seated on a throne, crowned as Queen of Heaven and holding her son, his hand raised in blessing, upon her knee. Her expression is a reference to the suffering and death of Christ; Coppo's Madonna is mournful because she senses the tragic events to come.

Although technical examination has revealed that the faces of the Madonna and Child were overpainted at a later date, they still retain much of Coppo's style in the emphasis on linear accents in the nose, lips, and eyes, divisions that are strengthened by the harsh modeling. Every shape is treated as an abstracted form, severe and clear-cut. Here Coppo's wedge-shaped depressions in the halo are smaller and more numerous than those in the *Crucifix*, creating a glitter of gold around the face. The energetic Christ Child, remarkably unchildlike in appearance and holding a scroll in his left hand, is represented as savior and teacher. Coppo's dramatic style is also evident in the drapery, which is cut up in folds that are outlined by gold striations. These sharp, intense, and irregular sunburst shapes, which have little to do with the behavior of cloth, enliven the image and add tension to the representation.

The cycle of mosaics in the vault of the Baptistery of Florence (see fig. 2.33) is the most important pictorial undertaking of the Duecento in Florence. The *Last Judgment* on the west face (fig. 2.9) is attributed to Coppo. Such a prominent commission allowed him to display the vigor of his imagination and the power of his forms on an enormous scale. The central figure, more than 25 feet (7 m) high, is clear in design, with the masses broken into segments that are richly modeled in color. Foliate ornament adorns the border of the mandorla that surrounds him. Fixing the spectator with his gaze, Christ beckons with his right arm toward the blessed, while with his left he casts the damned into eternal fire. The athletic figures leaping from their tombs on the right are attributed to Coppo, as is the terrifying hell scene, in which a few punishments and demons suffice for the whole. Around Satan, the writhing serpents and monstrous toads that devour the damned are rendered with the zigzag shapes characteristic of Coppo's style. Coppo's mosaic of Christ was the most awe-inspiring representation of divinity in Italian art until Michelangelo. Although his name was not mentioned in later sources, Coppo's vision inspired, directly or indirectly, generations of Florentine artists.

The painter Cenni di Pepi (active c. 1272–1302) is better known by the nickname Cimabue, which can be translated as "ox head" or "dehorner of oxen." The latter interpretation might refer to Cimabue's personality, which an early source describes as proud and arrogant. Whatever the meaning of this particular moniker, it is interesting at this

early moment in our survey of Italian art to note that many later artists are also best known by nicknames, including Cavallini, Masaccio, and Donatello. In most introductions to the history of art, Cimabue appears as the earliest of Florentine—and therefore of Italian—painters. This is where Vasari, who considered everything between the collapse of the Roman Empire and Cimabue's time to be clumsy, positioned him in his history of Italian art. In reality, Cimabue belongs not at the beginning of a development but at its end: he is the last Italo-Byzantine painter. Cimabue summed up a tradition that had been pervasive for nearly a century in Tuscany, and—splendid though his creations are—he began nothing essentially new.

The large, unsigned *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Angels and Prophets* (fig. 2.10), painted for Santa Trinita in Florence, has long been attributed to Cimabue. It is the most ambitious panel painting attempted by any Italian artist up until that time. When seen by candlelight inside the dark and lofty church, it must have made an overwhelming impression. The enthroned Madonna, shown without a crown, presents her child to the viewer. Angels seem to be holding up the throne, while in the arches below, Old Testament prophets provide a textual foundation by displaying scrolls with prophecies of the Virgin Birth. The throne's structure and its relationship to the angels is not clear. Cimabue does not even seem to have made up his mind whether the curves beneath the throne are arches in elevation, niches in depth, or both.

The Christ Child holds a scroll and looks directly at the observer. The gold striations of the drapery, derived from Byzantine tradition, have proliferated; hundreds of lines create a glittering network of shapes, as if the artist were trying to overwhelm the faithful with the regal majesty of his figure—an effect that would have been even more remarkable when the painting was still in situ in Santa Trinita. The blue pigment of the Virgin's mantle has darkened, but it was originally a brilliant blue, the customary color, as is the rose tone of her tunic. The angels' colorful wings and the gold striations would have emphasized the broad areas of vivid blue.

Cimabue's drawing style is restrained, in contrast to the power suggested by Coppo's broad lines. The eye structure is characteristic of his style, with the lower lid almost horizontal, the upper lid shaped like an upside-down V, and the sidelong glance contrasting with the downward tilt of the head. Cimabue had a keen sense of modeling, and he



2.10. CIMABUE. *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Angels and Prophets*, c. 1280. Panel, 11'7" × 7'4" (3.53 × 2.24 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned for the high altar of Sta. Trinita, Florence. The Uffizi Gallery is found in a structure designed by Vasari as an office building (*uffizi* means "offices" in Italian) for Cosimo I de' Medici (see fig. 20.41). The core of the collection consists of works originally commissioned or owned by the Medici family, including many works of ancient sculpture, but the museum also has works such as this from Florentine churches. The Uffizi Gallery is a good place to achieve an overview of Florentine Renaissance painting, but the fresco paintings that represent some of the most impressive works created by Florentine artists during the Renaissance are found on the walls where they were originally painted in Florence, Padua, and Rome.

2.9. Mosaics of the *Last Judgment*, *Ranks of Angels*, and *Scenes from the Old Testament and the Lives of Christ and St. John the Baptist*; the central figure of Christ in the *Last Judgment* has been attributed to Coppo di Marcovaldo. Second half of thirteenth century. Baptistery, Florence. The other registers of the Baptistery vault feature scenes from the Old Testament and the lives of Christ and John the Baptist. These same themes were later represented on the bronze doors added to the Baptistery in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (see figs. 3.33, 7.4, 10.1).

delicately shaded the drapery except for the gold-striated garments of Christ and the Virgin. None of the forms seems weighty, however, and no head is really three-dimensional. Cimabue wished to show everything that he knew to exist, depicting both ears even in a three-quarters view of the face, as though no solid mass of the head should intervene to hide one. The idea that the image of an object was received by the human eye as a reflection of light had yet to find its way into painting. At the same time, however, Cimabue differentiated psychological types carefully, as in the distinction between the youthful angels and the Old Testament prophets below. He delighted in rendering complicated shapes, long, slender fingers, and, for the throne, ornament derived from classical sources. Even on the gold background, he did not stop inventing: the background and the haloes are enriched with shifting patterns of incised lines and a series of punched dots.

Cimabue's adherence to the Byzantine style is best demonstrated in a large *Crucifix*, perhaps originally intended for the rood beam or choir screen of Santa Croce in Florence (figs. 2.11–2.12). Cimabue based his composition on the Byzantine-inspired *Christus patiens* (see figs. 2.4, 2.7), but his version is both enormous in size and simplified in subject and composition. The patterned apron and text at the top do not distract us from the body of Christ, while the half-length figures of the Virgin and John the Evangelist in the side terminals, their heads inclined inward, direct our attention back to the suffering Christ. The heads and hands of the two subsidiary figures are stylized and segmented in the Byzantine manner, as is the huge body of Christ, which sways even more dramatically than did the figure in the *Crucifix* by Coppo (see fig. 2.7). Yet through subtle changes in the basic Byzantine pattern, Cimabue created an image of powerful expressiveness. The transparent loincloth allows us to experience the full sweep
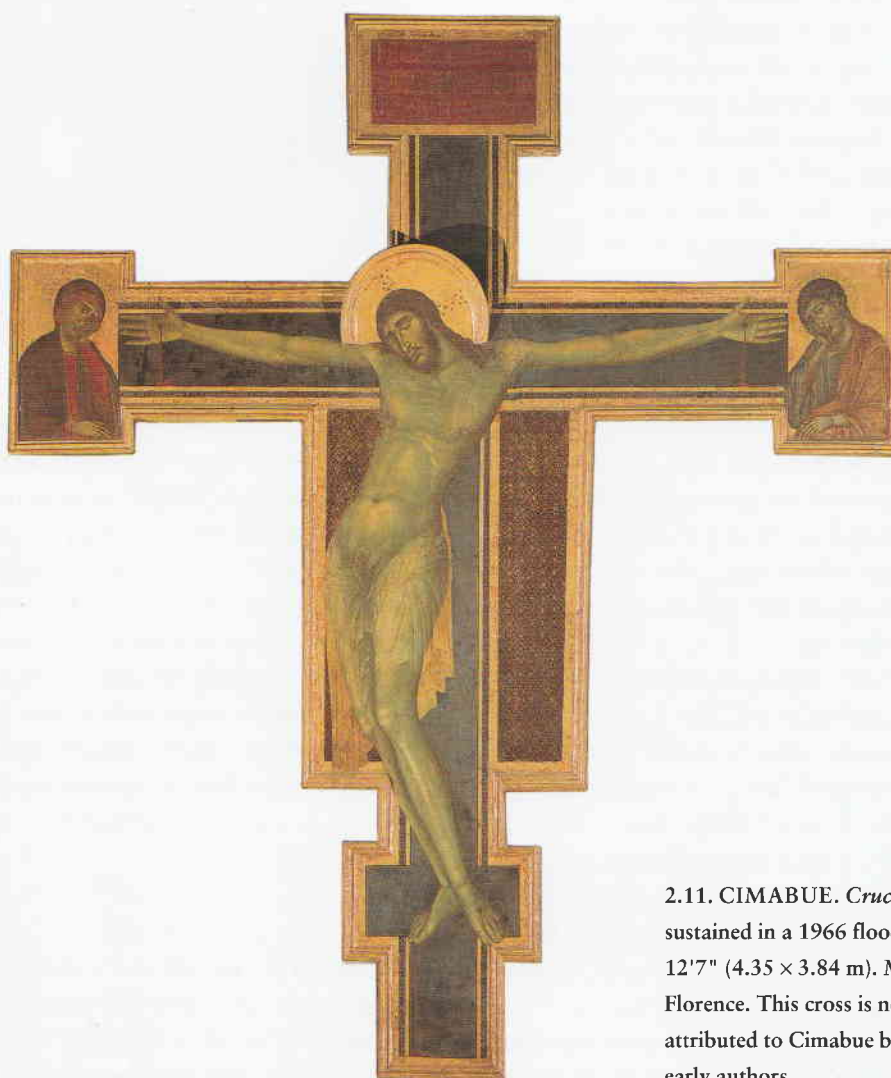


2.11. CIMABUE. *Crucifix* (before damage sustained in a 1966 flood). 1280s. Panel, 14'3" × 12'7" (4.35 × 3.84 m). Museo di Sta. Croce, Florence. This cross is not signed, but it was attributed to Cimabue by Vasari and other early authors.

2.12. CIMABUE. *Crucifix* (fig. 2.11, after restoration). A flood on November 4, 1966 severely damaged this painting. There were fifty-six earlier documented floods, including major ones in 1177, 1333, and 1557, but the one in 1966 seems to have been the worst in Florence's history. At the time, Cimabue's *Crucifix* was displayed in the ex-refectory of Sta. Croce (see fig. 3.31), where the surging waters of the flood were approximately 20 feet high. The painting was damaged when folding wooden chairs stored in the refectory, which was often used for meetings, were lifted by the surging water and banged against its surface. The areas that were lost have been left unrestored. Many important Italian archives were lost with the flooding of the National Library, adjacent to Sta. Croce.

of the swaying body, and Cimabue increased the sense of tension by stretching the arms outward rather than letting them sag as they had in earlier Byzantine and Italian examples. Although the sense of Christ's suffering has increased, the figure still follows the elegant, two-dimensional Byzantine pattern. The abstraction with which Cimabue approached his subject is evident in his treatment of the blood that flows from the wounds in Christ's hands; rather than sticking to his flesh naturalistically, it falls straight downward and pools only when it encounters the decorative gold border.

Cimabue was a monumental artist not just in tempera, but in fresco and mosaic as well; he probably continued the Baptistery mosaics started by Coppo and others. His abilities as a fresco painter are suggested by his cycle of frescoes at the church of San Francesco at Assisi.

St. Francis, who was called the *Poverello* (little poor man) of Assisi and who married "Lady Poverty" by renouncing all possessions, is enshrined in a double church erected over his tomb. Probably built with the collaboration of French and German architects, the Upper Church is almost completely lined with frescoes, and its windows are filled with stained glass (see fig. 2.15). These cycles make this the most nearly complete large-scale cycle of religious imagery in Italy before the Sistine Chapel (see figs. 14.17, 17.23). Cimabue's poorly preserved *Crucifixion* (fig. 2.13) is difficult to decipher because the whites, painted with white lead, have oxidized and turned black with time. Later painters learned from this transformation, and Cennini warned painters not to use white lead on walls.

Cimabue here conceived the Crucifixion as a universal catastrophe. Christ writhes on the cross, his head bent in pain—perhaps already in death, although this is impossible to determine in the fresco's present state. A great wind seems to have broken loose, perhaps in reference to the sudden darkness that accompanied the Crucifixion. (When

2.13. CIMABUE. Fresco cycle. After 1279. Approx. 17 × 24' (5.18 × 7.32 m). Upper Church of S. Francesco, Assisi. Perhaps commissioned by Pope Nicholas III Orsini. In the bottom register is the *Crucifixion*. The ruined lunette fresco above may have represented *Christ in Glory*. The angels seen behind the arcade are in a better condition than the larger frescoes and give a better sense of Cimabue's color palette. The ruined scene to the right of the *Crucifixion* is *The Vision of the Throne and the Book of Seven Seals*, an unusual scene based on the New Testament Book of Revelations (4:2–4).

an eclipse of the sun takes place, a strong and unexpected wind sweeps across the landscape.) Angels hover in the air, their drapery blown by the fierce wind, and hands reach upward from the crowd below toward the crucified Christ. From his side blood and water—allusions to the sacraments of the Eucharist and baptism—pour into a cup held by a flying angel. To our left are Mary, the other holy women, and the apostles; on the opposite side are the Romans, chief priests, and elders, including the dramatically posed figure of the soldier who recognized Christ as the son of God. Even from this ruined fresco we can understand that Cimabue was interested in bold theatrical effects and in creating a narrative scene that could project the intensity of a moment of revelation.

## Painting in Rome

While Cimabue ruled the Florentine scene, a remarkable school of painters was working in Rome, where the practice of mural decoration in fresco and mosaic had continued unbroken since at least the Early Christian period. Fresco painting probably links back to the ancient Romans and perhaps even the Etruscans. The late thirteenth century saw a brief increase in pictorial activity in Rome that continued until the seat of the papacy moved from Rome to Avignon in southern France in the early fourteenth century. The arrival of Greek masters from Constantinople after 1204 may have given Roman artists a certain impetus; it is documented that in 1218 Pope Honorius III imported mosaicists—probably either Greek or Greek-trained—from Venice.

The climax of Duecento monumental art in Rome is the apse mosaic of Santa Maria Maggiore (fig. 2.14), signed by Jacopo Torriti and executed during the pontificate of Nicholas IV (1285–1294). It shows how a Roman artist of the period responded to both the city's Early Christian heritage and the imported style from Byzantium. In the center, Christ and the Virgin, robed in gold with blue shadows, are seated on a cushion with their feet on footstools. The blue of their robes is repeated throughout the composition, starting with the deep blue background of their mandorla, which is studded with silver stars. The gold ground is crowded with curling acanthus scrolls populated by ducks, doves, parrots, pheasants, cranes, and peacocks. The colors within the shell-niche at the crown of the apse move through a startling succession: gold, sky blue, rose, and green. The mosaic combines the subject of the Coronation of the Virgin with the linear style of Byzantine mosaic art, while the scrolls and shell-niche are based on late Roman examples, probably of the mid-fifth century. Torriti's work embodies fragments of a fifth-century mosaic, including a



2.14. JACOPO TORRITI. *Coronation of the Virgin*. c. 1294. Apse mosaic. Sta. Maria Maggiore, Rome. The scenes between the windows below are the *Nativity*, the *Dormition of the Virgin*, and the *Adoration of the Magi*.

river god and a sailing ship just visible at the bottom left. More important than these diverse origins (including the pre-Christian river god) is the ease with which they are harmonized. The drapery motifs, for example, are at once Byzantine in their linearity, Gothic in their amplitude, and classical in their unity. A new style was emerging in Rome, in which the three currents most prevalent in the formation of Italian art were approaching fusion. Whether there is any reflection here of the developments taking place in the work of the youthful Giotto (see fig. 3.2) or at Assisi remains difficult to determine.

At Assisi, several Roman painters, including Torriti, were active in the nave of the Upper Church of San Francesco (fig. 2.15), probably after Cimabue had finished his work in the transept and choir. One of these, called the Isaac Master, painted two scenes from the story of Isaac and Jacob (fig. 2.16) in the upper level of frescoes. In the Isaac and Esau scene, a flat ceiling with a diamond pattern in dark and light to indicate coffering, the elaborate hangings on the bed, and a little colonnade at its base are motifs often found in Roman thirteenth-century art (see fig. 2.18), while the drapery curves—at once classical, Byzantine, and Gothic—recall those of Torriti.

The narrative is tense. In the adjoining fresco, Jacob, abetted by Rebecca, has received the blessing of the blind Isaac by impersonating his brother Esau (Genesis 27:5–27). Here Esau, Isaac's favorite son, returns expecting the blessing. Isaac, realizing he has been tricked, says to Esau, "Who art thou?" Isaac's startled pose expresses the Bible's report that he "trembled very exceedingly" (Genesis 27:32–33), while the deceiver Jacob slinks away to the right. Stiff as the scene may be in poses and gestures, and imperfectly realized in the weightlessness of the bodies under their drapery, this unidentified painter was able to express psychological interaction and to capture the dramatic significance of a narrative with a subtlety not seen in earlier surviving works. Also new here is the modeling of the faces and hands, which reveals the artist's close observation of light. A date in the 1280s or early 1290s seems likely, but the identity of this artist remains unknown.

It was Pietro Cavallini (Pietro de' Cerroni, nicknamed Cavallino, "little horse") who transfigured Roman painting by his discovery of how light realized form. Born in about 1240, he was active until about 1330. We know little about Cavallini, but a notation by his son tells us that he lived to a hundred and never covered his head, even in



2.15. View of the frescoes on the side wall of the Upper Church of S. Francesco, Assisi, with scenes from the life of St. Francis on the bottom tier (see fig. 3.26). Above are scenes from the Old Testament, including, in the second bay from the right, scenes from the story of Isaac and Esau attributed to the Isaac Master (see fig. 2.16).

2.16. ISAAC MASTER. *Isaac Discovers that He Has Been Tricked by Jacob*. 1280s or early 1290s. Fresco, 10 × 10' (3 × 3 m). Upper Church of S. Francesco, Assisi.

the worst days of winter. The Florentine sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti, who knew frescoes and mosaics by Cavallini that are still preserved and others that have perished, including cycles in Old St. Peter's and elsewhere, called him a "most noble master" and praised his work for its "great relief," meaning three-dimensionality.

Cavallini's new style seems to have been the result of the careful study he made of Early Christian frescoes after he was commissioned to restore the partially ruined frescoes of Old and New Testament scenes that decorated the nave of Rome's St. Paul's Outside the Walls. He probably also examined the surviving Early Christian mosaics that survived in the city. Although his work at St. Paul's was destroyed in a fire in 1823, watercolor copies of some of the scenes are preserved; here we reproduce *Christ Preaching in Jerusalem, with a Donor* (fig. 2.17). It is not clear whether this fresco was based on remains of an Early Christian work or whether it was a new invention by Cavallini designed to fit stylistically with the early frescoes that had survived in reasonably good condition. In any case, Cavallini expressed the late Roman naturalism that had survived into the Early Christian period with well-lit, rounded, three-dimensional figures, soft drapery folds,
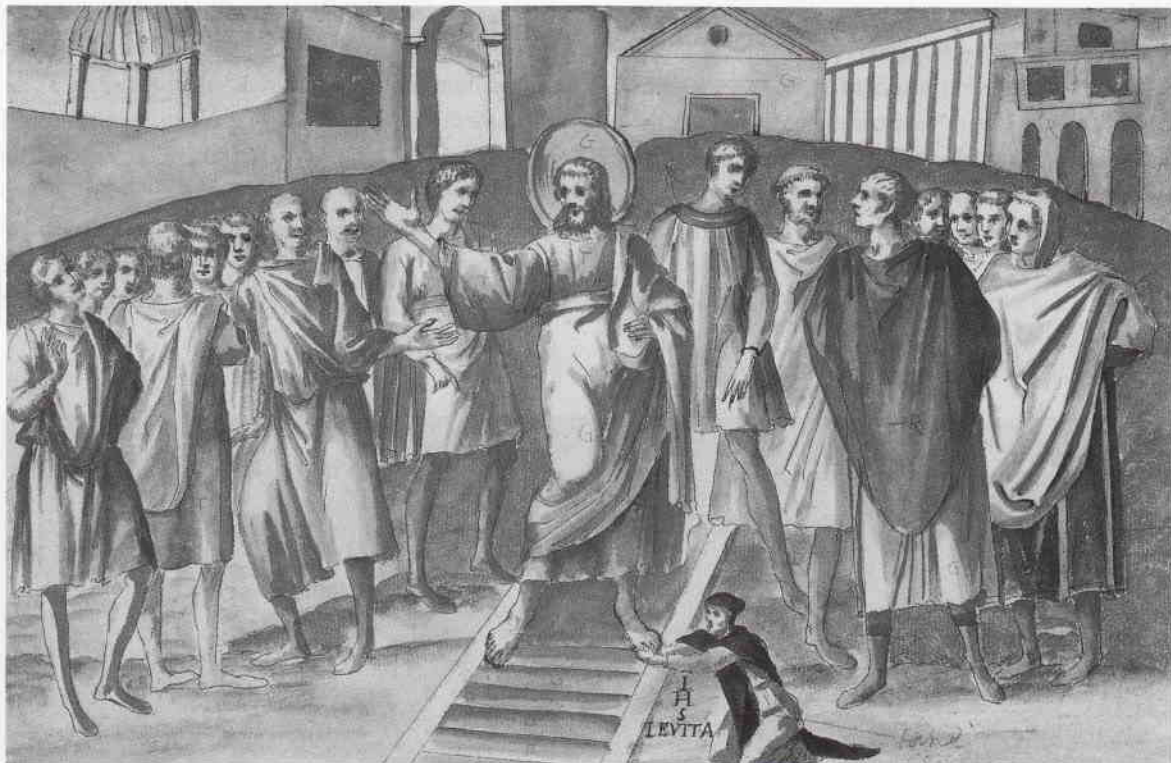


2.17. Copy after PIETRO CAVALLINI. *Christ Preaching in Jerusalem, with a Donor,* watercolor copy of lost fresco from St. Paul's Outside the Walls, Rome. The watercolor preserves the composition of Cavallini's lost fresco, which was executed in the late 1270s. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Barb. Lat 4406, f. 119.

2.18. PIETRO CAVALLINI. *Birth of the Virgin*. Late 1290s. Mosaic, figures approximately life-sized. Sta. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Commissioned by Bertoldo Stefaneschi. For later examples of this same subject, see figs. 9.11, 18.17.

deep architectural settings, clear gestures, and well-ordered compositions of figures set in the foreground. The fresco preserved in the watercolor had these qualities, whether it was largely Early Christian or largely (or completely) by Cavallini. The centralized composition with the apostles gathered around Christ bears a startling resemblance to one of the first great works of Renaissance painting, Masaccio's *Tribute Money* (see fig. 8.9), although there is probably no connection between the two.

The most important achievements by Cavallini still visible in Rome are the mosaics in the apse of Santa Maria in Trastevere and the fragmentary frescoes in Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, both of which Ghiberti mentions but neither of which can be securely dated beyond the probability that they were done in the 1290s. The classical stylistic idioms that Cavallini learned at St. Paul's are evident in the *Birth of the Virgin* (fig. 2.18) from the series of the life of the Virgin in Santa Maria in Trastevere. The background appears like a stage set based on ancient Roman domestic architecture and shrines, while its inlaid ornament derives from Roman medieval sources. The women by the mother's couch and the two midwives about to



2.19. PIETRO CAVALLINI. *Last Judgment* (detail of damaged fresco). 1290s. Sta. Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome.

bathe the newborn Mary (a theme borrowed from representations of the birth of Christ; see fig. 2.20) carry their bread, wine, and water with the solemnity of a ritual. The figures are imbued with classical grace and simplicity, while the drapery masses recall Greek and Roman sculpture in the breadth of their forms and the ease with which the folds fall, in sharp contrast to the tense complexity of the drapery of Torriti or the Isaac Master. Most importantly, the suggestion of three-dimensionality in heads and bodies seems to depend largely on the play of light.

This is a fundamental revolution in artistic vision, and it is clear that it came about through an intimate acquaintance with Early Christian models, both frescoes and mosaics. An even sharper transformation is visible in Cavallini's fragmentary fresco of the *Last Judgment* in Santa Cecilia in Trastevere (fig. 2.19), which is all that remains of a cycle that once covered the walls of the church. In the enthroned Christ and apostles, whose rich coloristic harmonies are dominated by soft orange and green, and in the angels with feathers in graduated colors, there is a new sense of mass and texture revealed through light. Cavallini's illumination, while still not originating from a single source—that development would not occur for more than a century—plays richly on the drapery and faces of the seated apostles. Forms seem to have roundness through the action of light. A columnar roundness makes the anatomical structure of the neck palpable in a manner not found in art since ancient times. Although the locks of hair are still somewhat patterned, the beards are naturalistic in texture and the mantles have a soft and silky sheen, no doubt due in part to Cavallini's adoption of the Roman use of marble dust in his *intonaco*.

As we shall see in Chapter 3, the innovations of Cavallini provided a strong incentive, perhaps even inspiration, for the Florentine master Giotto, who must have studied Cavallini's work in Rome.

## Sculpture

Sometime during the 1250s, the sculptor Nicola d'Apulia arrived in Pisa from the south; he is known today as Nicola Pisano (active 1258–1278). He was the first of many sculptural innovators, and his unexpected classicism has sometimes been attributed to a connection with the classicizing culture of the court of Emperor Frederick II, who ruled in Apulia. But Pisa, with its Roman history and pretensions, also had a strong classical tradition, and its ancient monuments had been copied by Pisan artists earlier in the century.

Nicola's first known work, a marble pulpit for the Baptistery of the Cathedral of Pisa (see fig. 2.1), was signed with an inscription in which the artist emphasized his skill, in keeping with the self-laudatory inscriptions common in medieval Tuscany. Busketus, the architect of the Cathedral of Pisa, had even compared himself to Ulysses and Daedalus. The presence of a pulpit in a baptistery can be understood through the latter's special importance in the Italian city-states: it was the only place to celebrate baptism, the sacrament that also brought a child into citizenship in the commune. The baptistery, usually a separate building, thus had civic as well as religious importance. Sermons by Archbishop Federigo Visconti, who commissioned Nicola's pulpit, contain vivid symbolism of the water used in baptism as a vehicle for divine grace. Nicola's hexagonal pulpit is a magnificent construction of white marble from the quarries at nearby Carrara (see fig. 1.18), with columns and colonnettes of polished granite and variegated red marble.

Nicola's study of the ancient Roman Corinthian capitals found in abundance in Pisa gives his own versions firmness and precision, but their acanthus leaves resemble the more naturalistic ornament on French Gothic cathedrals. While Nicola's arches are rounded rather than pointed in the

Gothic manner, they are enriched with the scalloped decoration known as cusping developed in French cathedral architecture. There are five high-relief narrative panels on the pulpit, with further reliefs of Old Testament prophets on the triangular spandrels and figures in high relief standing over the capitals. The pupils of the eyes were inset with stone or painted, while the backgrounds of the scenes originally featured patterned decoration not unlike that found in French Gothic manuscript paintings.

Perhaps Nicola's patron required him to compress separate incidents into the same frame: the initial panel includes the *Annunciation, Nativity, and Annunciation to the Shepherds* (fig. 2.20). During the Annunciation the Angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will be the mother of the son of God. According to theologians, when Gabriel's words struck her ear, the human body of Christ was conceived in Mary's womb. The Annunciation is celebrated on March 25 and, until the Gregorian calendar was adopted in the late sixteenth century, the new year in Rome and Tuscany began on this date.

In the *Nativity*, Mary reclines upon a mattress, while Joseph, at the lower left, is a silent spectator. Two shepherds and their dog (now all headless) can be seen in the upper right. These peripheral figures act as a kind of frame for the enormous figure of the reclining Virgin. The style suggests that Nicola drew his figures on the marble slab and then carved inwards to free heads, arms, and trees from the background or from each other. No attempt was made to suggest distant space, and the heads all lie on the surface plane, no matter how much the figures may overlap. This also means that the forms of the relief are

related to the surrounding frame, a feature difficult to observe in photographs but effective when facing the actual pulpit.

The dense packing of the figures and the rendering of their heads can be traced to classical models, especially to figures on Roman sarcophagi, of which a number had remained in Pisa since antiquity or been brought there more recently. Nicola's Virgin has been characterized as a Roman Juno; the straight nose, full lips, broad cheeks, low forehead, and wavy hair all come directly from classical art. Despite these specific references to antiquity and the figures' classical weight and dignity, the whole is strangely unclassical. The drapery breaks into sharp angles, creating an allover network reminiscent of the Italo-Byzantine forms in contemporary painting. The general compositional principles in the Baptistery pulpit reliefs are not far from those of Coppo di Marcovaldo and Cimabue. Classical and Gothic details seem intrusions at this stage.

In the *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 2.21), the seated Virgin is imitated, almost line for line, from the seated Phaedra on a Roman sarcophagus representing the legend of Hippolytus (fig. 2.22), a borrowing that was first mentioned by Vasari in the sixteenth century. The three kings look like Roman bearded figures, but again the drapery shows the staccato breaks of the Italo-Byzantine style. The nude male figure standing over one of the capitals, who is now identified as *Daniel* (fig. 2.23), was imitated from a figure on a Roman Hercules sarcophagus; his unusually large head is probably in compensation for the low viewpoint of the spectator. This classically inspired *Daniel* is the first nude in Italian art who might be described as heroic.



2.20. NICOLA PISANO. *Annunciation, Nativity, and Annunciation to the Shepherds*. 1260. Marble, 33½ × 44½" (85 × 113 cm). ▥ Panel on the Pisa Baptistery pulpit (see fig. 2.1).



2.21. NICOLA PISANO. *Adoration of the Magi*. 1260. Marble, 33½ × 44½" (85 × 113 cm). ▥ Panel on the Pisa Baptistery pulpit (see fig. 2.1).

2.22. Ancient Roman sarcophagus with the *Story of Phaedra and Hippolytus*. 2nd century CE. Marble, length 6' (2.2 m). In Nicola's day this sarcophagus was on the façade of Pisa Cathedral; today it is in the nearby cemetery known as the Camposanto.



2.23. NICOLA PISANO. *Daniel*. 1260. Marble, height 22" (56 cm). 🏛 Figure on the Pisa Baptistery pulpit (see fig. 2.1).

Nicola's interest in the classical may be the result of several factors. Pisans during this period thought of their city as a new Rome, and classical sarcophagi were reused for burials throughout the city. In addition, Nicola's use of the classical gives his scenes a majesty and dignity not seen in earlier Italian reliefs; his motivation in looking to the antique may have been based on a desire to find sculptural models that offered a mood and character he deemed appropriate for the profundity of his Christian subject matter.

Five years after he completed the Pisa pulpit, Nicola was called to Siena, where he executed an even more ambitious pulpit. He worked on this immense undertaking from 1265 to 1268 with the assistance of a group of pupils that included his son Giovanni and three other sculptors who would later become well known, including Arnolfo di Cambio (see figs. 2.36, 2.38, 2.40).

The *Madonna and Child* on the Siena pulpit (fig. 2.24) demonstrates how Nicola's style became more Gothic in the decade after the completion of the Pisa Baptistery pulpit. When compared with a French Gothic figure of Christ (fig. 2.25), we see the similarity in how drapery is pulled up over the arm so that it can cascade down in rich, curvilinear Gothic folds. Note too the manner in which the Virgin's breasts are visible through the drapery, a device seen in the French Gothic statues of Reims Cathedral. Whether Nicola knew of these innovations through a visit to France or through an examination of small works such as ivory carvings remains unknown.

Nicola's son Giovanni inherited the shop after his father's death, sometime between 1278 and 1287. Giovanni Pisano (c. 1250–c. 1314) designed the lower half of the façade of the Cathedral in Siena. The building itself had been begun in the early thirteenth century and the first



2.24. NICOLA PISANO. *Madonna and Child.* 1260. Marble, height 33½" (85 cm). 🏛 Figure on the Siena Cathedral pulpit.
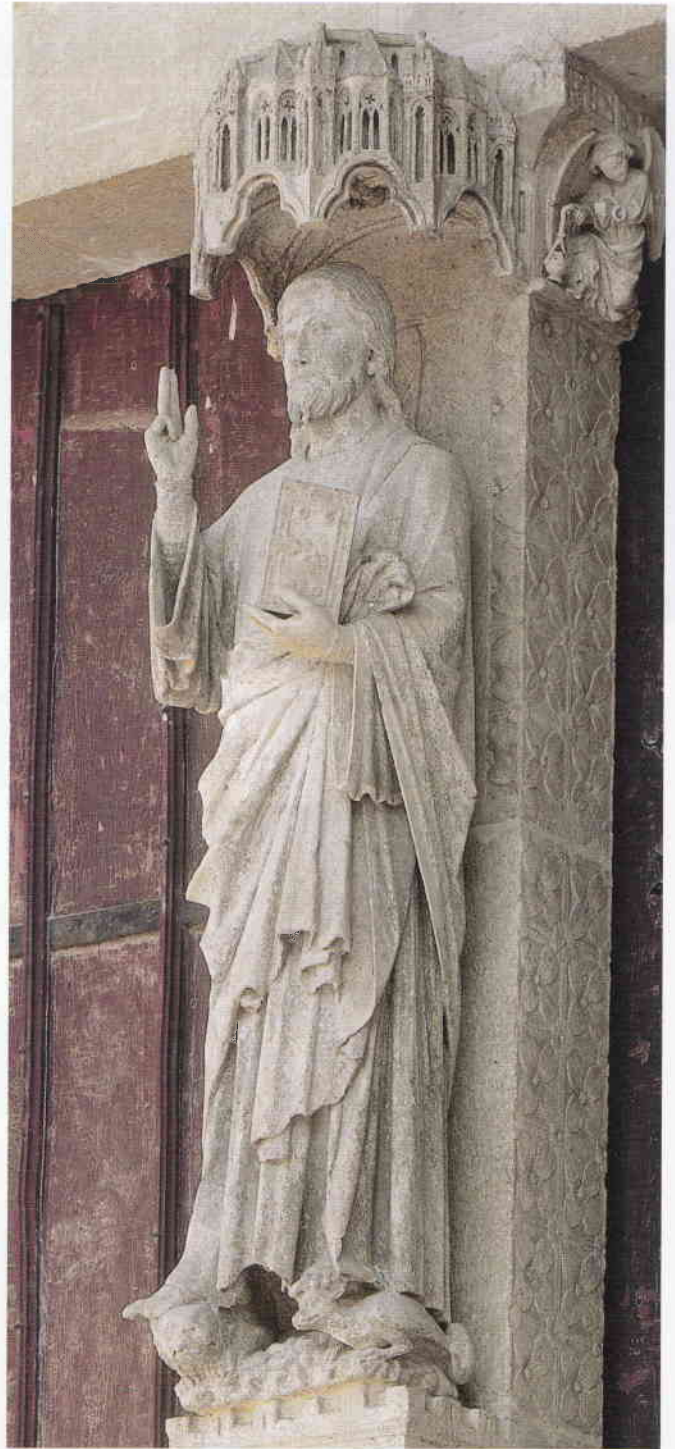


2.25. An example of French Gothic. Standing figure of *Christ.* c. 1220. Limestone, originally polychromed, height 8'6" (2.59 m). Cathedral of Notre Dame, Amiens, France. This figure is popularly known as the "handsome" or "beautiful God" (*Beau Dieu*).

phase of the construction was completed, with the exception of the façade, by the early 1270s. The black-and-white striping of the exterior and interior emphasizes the communal content of this monument in its reference to the coat of arms of the Sienese commune (figs. 2.26–2.27). The façade

2.26. Interior of Siena Cathedral. This cathedral replaced two earlier ones, the first dating from the ninth or the tenth century and a second that was consecrated in 1179. The interior seen here was built during the first half of the thirteenth century and completed in the early 1270s. The cathedral is built with two colors of marble: white from Carrara and dark green from Prato. It was lengthened by the addition of two bays in the choir area in the fourteenth century; the current length is 239'8" (89.4 m).
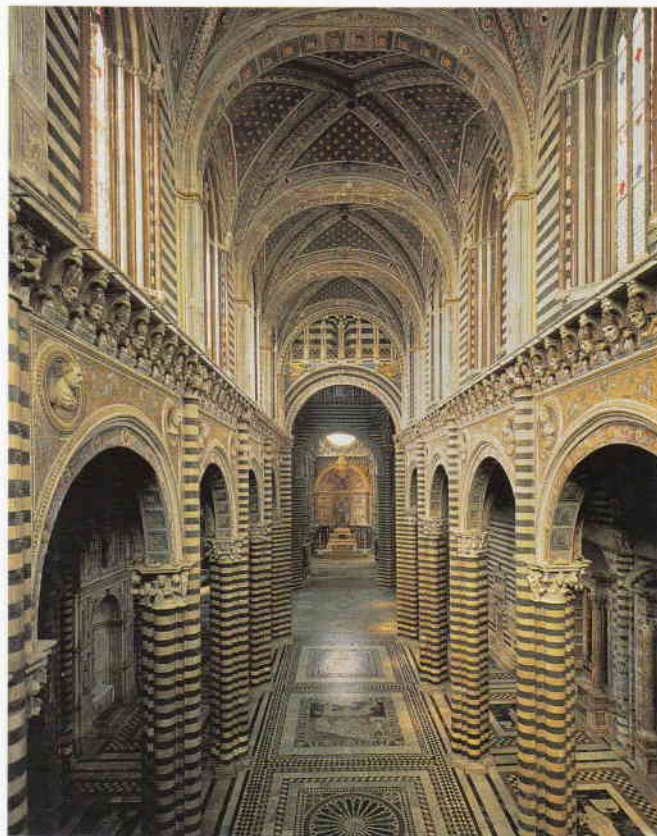
*Below:* 2.27. Siena Cathedral. The lower half of the façade, including statuary, is by the sculptor Giovanni Pisano and dates to 1284–99. Marble sculpture (originally) with other, colored stones and mosaic panels (largely restored). Most of the sculptures are copies; originals are now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena (see fig. 2.28). The bell tower seen here dates from before 1215 and is the only surviving part of an earlier cathedral dedicated in 1179. The arches seen to the right were part of a Trecento expansion of the cathedral that was never completed; they would have formed the side aisle of a new nave.

Giovanni designed turns decisively toward the Gothic in its decorative motifs and use of large-scale figural sculpture.

In contrast to Nicola, Giovanni's work is closer to the more expressionistic German Gothic style than to the courtly beauty of the Gothic as it had developed in France (see fig. 2.25). The statues of prophets and saints on the Siena façade twist and turn as if to declare their independence from the confines of their architectural setting, even though it was Giovanni himself who laid out the arches, gables, and pinnacles that surround them. This potent movement is evident in Giovanni's *Mary, Sister of Moses* (fig. 2.28). The tension of her pose—especially the neck projecting sharply from the torso and then twisted to one side—can be explained in part by a sensitivity to the spectator's viewpoint. Giovanni brought the neck outward so

that when the figure was seen from below, the face would not be hidden by the breasts and knees. Mary's dramatic pose may also be related to her original position on the side of the façade, around the corner from the rest of the figures; she leans forward as if to commune with her fellow



2.28. GIOVANNI PISANO. *Mary, Sister of Moses.* 1284–99. Marble, height 6'2³⁄8" (1.89 m). Removed from original location on the façade of the Duomo, Siena (fig. 2.27). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.



2.29. GIOVANNI PISANO. Pistoia pulpit. 1298–1301. White Carrara marble, variegated red marble, originally with inlaid and painted highlights, patterned glass, height 12'9" (3.89 m). 🏛 Sant'Andrea, Pistoia. The inscription on the pulpit reads: "In praise of the triune God I link the beginning with the end of this task in thirteen hundred and one. The originator and donor of the work is the canon Arnoldus, may he be ever blessed. Andrea, [son?] of Vitello, and Tino, son of Vitale, well known under such a name, are the best of treasurers. Giovanni carved it, who performed no empty work. The son of Nicola and blessed with higher skill, Pisa gave him birth, endowed with mastery greater than any seen before."

prophets and sibyls on the front. Giovanni reduced the figure's features to their essentials because fine detail would be lost from below and only the most powerful masses and movements would register on the eye. His boldness is now exaggerated because of the manner in which the porous stone he used has weathered over the centuries.

The self-laudatory inscription his father placed on the Pisa Baptistery pulpit is exceeded by the long inscription that Giovanni carved on the pulpit he created between 1298 and 1301 for Sant'Andrea in Pistoia (fig. 2.29). Here the cusped arches are sharply pointed and the leaves of the capitals more richly three-dimensional, while the classical elements so important in Nicola's art are submerged by a rising tide of emotionalism. The projections are stronger, the undercutting of heads, arms, and other projecting elements deeper.

A scene especially suited to Giovanni's new style is the *Massacre of the Innocents*, showing the children under the age of two who were slain at the command of King Herod to destroy the infant he feared would usurp his power (fig. 2.30). As Herod gives the order, the stage is filled with wailing mothers, screaming children, and violent, sword-wielding soldiers; below, mothers cradle dead babies. Even the prophets in the spandrels and sibyls above the capitals share in the agitation. The sibyls, Greek and Roman prophetesses who were believed to have foretold the coming of Christ, can be seen again and again in Italian art, culminating in their representation by Michelangelo on the Sistine Ceiling (see fig. 17.36). One figure (fig. 2.31)



2.31. GIOVANNI PISANO. *Sibyl*. 1298–1301. Marble, height 24⅜" (62 cm). 🏛 Figure on the Pistoia pulpit (fig. 2.29).

2.30. GIOVANNI PISANO. *Massacre of the Innocents*. 1298–1301. Marble, 33 × 40⅛" (83 × 102 cm). 🏛 Panel on the Pistoia pulpit (fig. 2.29).

communicates drama in the turn of her head, the twisted movement of the figure, and the flow and flicker of the drapery. Giovanni's most unexpected figure supports the base of a column on the nape of his neck; his struggle is evident in his pose and the tortured expression on his face.

Reflecting the mélange of styles that coexisted in Duecento Tuscany, the Pistoia pulpit is roughly contemporary with the last manifestations of the Italo-Byzantine style in painting. At this time, Italian Gothic sculpture and Italo-Byzantine painting were both characterized by an emphasis on dramatic emotion in narrative scenes—an interest that reached its most subtle manifestation in the frescoes of Giotto, to be studied in the next chapter. The grand simplicity of Giovanni Pisano's *Madonna and Child* at the Arena Chapel in Padua (fig. 2.32), her clear-cut profile, so different from the Romanizing profiles by Nicola, the broad sweep of the drapery masses enhancing the volume of the figure beneath, the geniality and human directness of the expressions—all suggest a close familiarity with the art of Giotto, the master whose frescoes fill the walls of the same chapel (see fig. 3.3).



2.32. GIOVANNI PISANO. *Madonna and Child*. c. 1305–6. Marble, height 50¾" (129 cm). Arena Chapel, Padua. Commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni, who also commissioned the chapel's frescoes from Giotto (see figs. 3.3–3.17).

# Architecture

The transition from Romanesque to Gothic and the role of the classicizing elements so readily available in Italy can also be traced in architecture. One of the most remarkable early Romanesque buildings in Tuscany is the Florentine Baptistery (fig. 2.33; see fig. 2.39). By the fifteenth century the Florentines were convinced that this structure must have originally been constructed during the ancient Roman period as a temple to Mars, but current opinion dates it to the eleventh century. The pedimented windows of the upper story show the influence of the antique, as do the ribbed and Corinthian-style pilasters. The round arches that decorate the upper story are reminiscent of Roman architecture, but in antiquity such arcades were never supported on columns, as they are here. One of the first truly Renaissance structures, Brunelleschi's façade of the Ospedale degli Innocenti (see fig. 6.13), uses just such an arcade; his appropriation of this motif from the Baptistery may have been inspired by the Florentine belief that this venerable and impressive civic and religious structure had been constructed in the ancient Roman period.

By the thirteenth century, most new buildings in Florence were being constructed in an Italian version of the Gothic. Two impressive Gothic churches, Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce (see figs. 2.34, 2.37), were commissioned respectively by the Dominicans and Franciscans, new mendicant orders founded in the thirteenth century that required large open spaces to hold the standing crowds who gathered to hear the preachers for which these orders became famous (church pews were a later development). When the crowds overflowed the enormous churches, portable pulpits were mounted near the façades and the preachers spoke to crowds gathered in their large piazzas.

The complexes erected throughout Italy by the Dominicans and Franciscans during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries had to be located on the edge of the city proper because of their huge scale, as the plans demonstrate (see figs. 2.35, 2.37). In addition to the church with its family chapels, these monastic centers had to include all the facilities needed for the numerous resident priests and nuns, including refectories (for dining) and two-story cloisters with monk's cells on the upper level (see fig. 9.6).

2.33. Florence, Baptistery. Romanesque (?). The building is usually dated to the eleventh century, but some argue that it was built as early as the sixth or seventh century. A consecration was held in 1059, supporting the eleventh-century date. The lantern dates from 1150 and the angled, striped corner pilasters were added in the thirteenth century. The materials are white Carrara marble and dark green marble from Prato. This historic view shows the building before the fifteenth-century bronze doors by Lorenzo Ghiberti, known as the *Gates of Paradise* (see figs. 10.1, 10.13–10.15), were removed in the late twentieth century for display in the nearby Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. During the Gothic period there was a sculptural group over the doorway, which was replaced in the sixteenth century with a marble group; in this photograph that group has been removed for restoration.

2.34. Nave and choir, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. An earlier Dominican church was founded here in 1221. This structure was begun in 1246, constructed between 1246 and the mid-1300s, and consecrated in 1420. The material is *pietra forte* (local limestone). For the later, Renaissance façade of the church, see fig. 10.6. For the location of some of the many works of art found here, see fig. 2.35.



Santa Maria Novella (figs. 2.34–2.35) exemplifies the simplicity of plan, organization, and detail that characterizes Italian Gothic architecture. The plan is derived from those developed for churches of the Cistercian Order in France, in which a flat east end was substituted for the more common rounded or polygonal apse. The relatively high side aisles at Santa Maria Novella, leaving little room for a clerestory above the nave and none for a triforium, are typically Italian. So is the contrast between the stone supports and arches and the plaster that covers walls and vaulting. The pointed arches are striped in stone like the arches of the tombs that line the lower, Gothic part of the façade (see fig. 10.6). The arches and vault ribs are flat (in French Gothic they are usually rounded), the colonettes found on the side walls of French Gothic churches are absent, and the piers that support the nave, which in France are delineated by clusters of colonettes, are as simple as those found in French Romanesque structures. There is, moreover, no formal separation between the nave
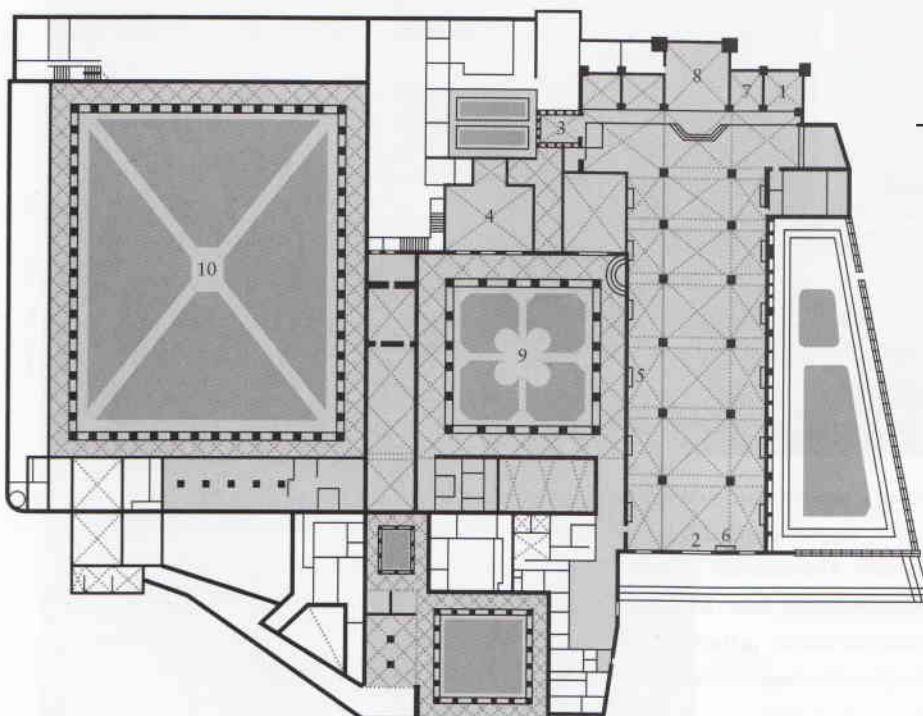
2.35. Plan of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence.
1. Original location for Duccio's *Madonna and Child* (see fig. 4.1).
2. *Coronation of the Virgin*, rose window by Andrea da Firenze (see fig. 5.9).
3. Strozzi Chapel with frescoes painted by Nardo di Cione, stained glass designed by the same artist, and altarpiece by Andrea Orcagna (see figs. 5.2–5.3).
4. Chapter House (Spanish Chapel), with frescoes by Andrea da Firenze (see figs. 5.1, 5.8).
5. *Trinity*, Masaccio (see fig. 8.21).
6. Original location of Sandro Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi* (see fig. 13.18).
7. Second Strozzi Chapel, with frescoes by Filippino Lippi and stained glass designed by the same artist (see figs. 13.33–13.34).
8. Tornabuoni Chapel (Capella Maggiore), with frescoes and altarpiece (now removed) by Domenico Ghirlandaio and stained glass designed by the same artist (see figs. 13.38–13.39).
9. Chiostro Verde (Green Cloister), with frescoes by Paolo Uccello and others (see fig. 11.4).
10. Large cloister.
The *Crucifix* painted by Giotto (see fig. 3.2) was probably painted for Sta. Maria Novella, but its original location in the church is unknown.

arcade and the wall above, which is pierced by simple oculi instead of the usual pointed Gothic windows. As a result, nothing interrupts the membrane of the wall, which creates not just an effect of unity, but even a feeling of calm repose. This is in striking contrast to the energetic pictorial art and rich sculpture that we have been discussing.

However different the architectural forms of Santa Maria Novella may be from the later, classically derived elements of the Renaissance, the harmony of its lines and spaces renders it a fitting precursor of such Quattrocento churches as Florence's San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito (see figs. 6.17–6.18). At a moment when French architects were trying to dissolve the wall entirely in order to convert churches into elaborate stone cages to embrace surfaces of colored glass, the builders of Santa Maria Novella proclaimed the quintessentially Italian supremacy of the wall.

So did the architect of Santa Croce (figs. 2.36–2.37), the Franciscan church on the opposite side of the city, but in a very different way. In all probability this master was



2.36. ARNOLFO DI CAMBIO (attributed to). Nave and choir, Sta. Croce, Florence. Begun 1294, with work continuing well into the Trecento. *Pietra forte* (local limestone). For the location of some of the many works of art found here, see fig. 2.37.

2.37. Plan of Sta. Croce, Florence.

1. Bardi Chapel, with frescoes by Giotto (see figs. 3.19–3.23).
2. Baroncelli Chapel, with frescoes by Taddeo Gaddi (see figs. 3.29, 3.30).
3. Bardi-Bardi di Vernio Chapel with frescoes by Maso di Banco (see fig. 3.27).
4. Alberti Chapel, with frescoes by Agnolo Gaddi (see figs. 3.19, 5.11).
5. *Annunciation* by Donatello (see fig. 10.21).
6. Tomb of Lionardo Bruni, by Bernardo Rossellino (see fig. 10.27).
7. Tomb of Carlo Marsuppini, by Desiderio da Settignano (see figs. 12.10, 12.11).
8. Tomb of Michelangelo, designed by Giorgio Vasari.
9. Tomb of the nineteenth-century Italian composer Giacomo Rossini, by G. Cassioli (1900).
10. Pulpit by Benedetto da Maiano.
11. Sacristy.
12. First cloister.
13. Refectory, with *Last Supper* and other subjects, frescoes by Taddeo Gaddi (see fig. 3.31).
14. Pazzi Chapel (Chapter House) by Filippo Brunelleschi (see figs. 6.1, 6.21).
15. Second cloister.
(Third cloister is not shown on plan.)
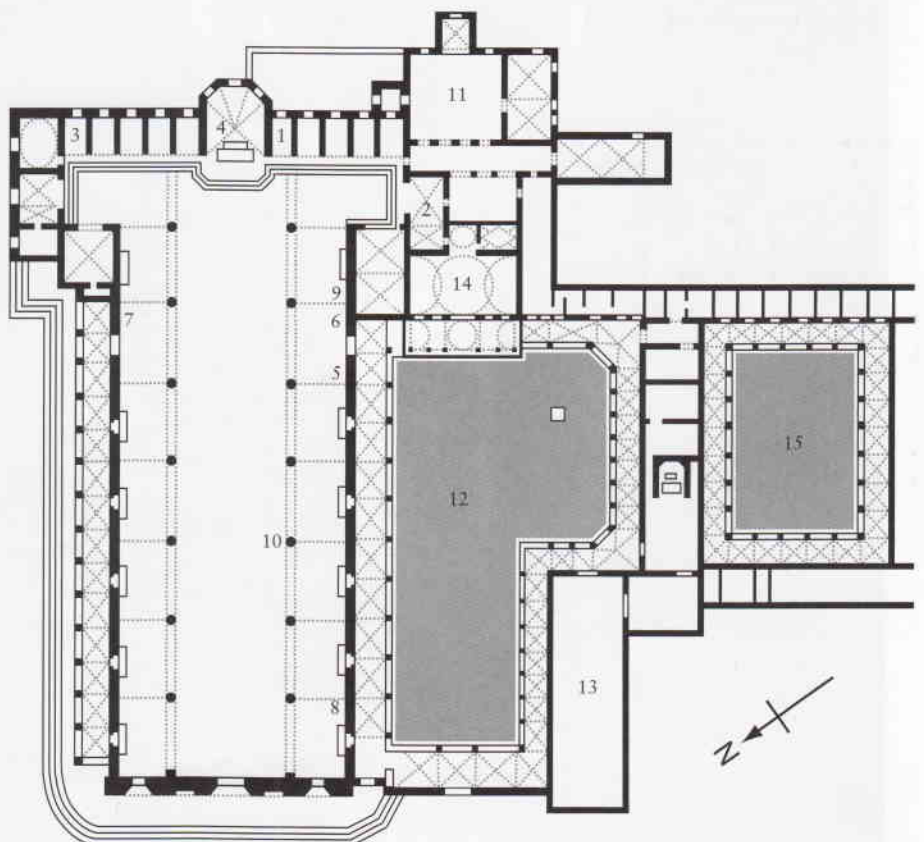
Arnolfo di Cambio, who was also important as a sculptor, a pupil and co-worker of Nicola Pisano, and the first architect of the new Cathedral of Florence (see figs. 2.38–2.39). The plan combines a timber-roofed nave with a vaulted polygonal apse separated from the nave by a triumphal arch somewhat like those of the Early Christian basilicas in Rome but with pointed arches and windows. Octagonal columns replace the compound piers used in Santa Maria Novella, which are needless here since there is no vaulting. A catwalk carried on corbels separates the small clerestory from the nave arcade, and carries the eye down the nave and up over the crossing to the triumphal arch.

Santa Croce's loftiness and the openness of its arches make it seem almost endless. From the start, the wall surfaces were intended for painting, as were the windows for stained glass. In fact, the nave was still being built when Giotto and his followers were at work painting frescoes on the walls of some of the transept chapels (see figs. 3.19–3.23). The Trecento painted decoration of the ceiling beams—still largely intact—is an essential aspect of the splendor of Santa Croce.

Florence's cathedral or Duomo (*duomo*, derived from the Latin word *domus*, "house," is the Italian word for cathedral) (figs. 2.38–2.39; see also fig. 1.8) was begun in 1296 under the direction of Arnolfo di Cambio to replace the earlier church of Santa Reparata, but work came practically to a standstill after Arnolfo's death in 1302. Attention turned to the Campanile, which was built in stages by three different architects: Giotto, Andrea Pisano, and, in the 1350s, Francesco Talenti. The cathedral itself was the subject of complex group activity. In 1355 a commission was appointed; its personnel were to change, but it included



2.38. Nave and choir, Florence Cathedral. Begun by Arnolfo di Cambio, 1296. Present nave by Francesco Talenti and others (after 1364). Dome engineered by Filippo Brunelleschi (see fig. 6.11). For views of the exterior, see figs. 1.8, 6.7–6.9.

**2.39. Plan of cathedral complex, Florence.**

The shaded plan represents the earlier church of Sta. Reparata.

A. Baptistery (see figs. 2.9, 2.33).

B. Campanile (see fig. 3.25), original location of reliefs by Andrea Pisano (see figs. 1.11, 3.32) and others, and figures by Donatello (see fig. 7.17) and others.

C. Duomo (see figs. 1.8, 6.7–6.9).

1. Portal with bronze doors by Andrea Pisano (see figs. 3.33–3.34).

2. Portal with first set of bronze doors by Lorenzo Ghiberti (see figs. 7.4–7.6).

3. Original location for second set of bronze doors (*Gates of Paradise*) by Lorenzo Ghiberti (see figs. 2.33, 10.1, 10.13–10.15), now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.

4. Porta della Mandorla with relief by Nanni di Banco (see fig. 7.16).

5. *Sir John Hawkwood*, by Paolo Uccello (see fig. 11.3).

6. *Niccolò da Tolentino*, by Andrea del Castagno (see fig. 11.18).

7. Sacristy portal with enameled terracotta relief and bronze doors by Luca della Robbia (see fig. 10.18). Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria* (see figs. 10.16–10.17) was located above this door.

8. Portal over which Donatello's *Cantoria* was originally placed (see fig. 10.19).

9. Sacristy with *intarsia* decoration by Antonio Manetti and others (see fig. 12.16).
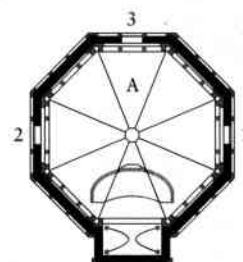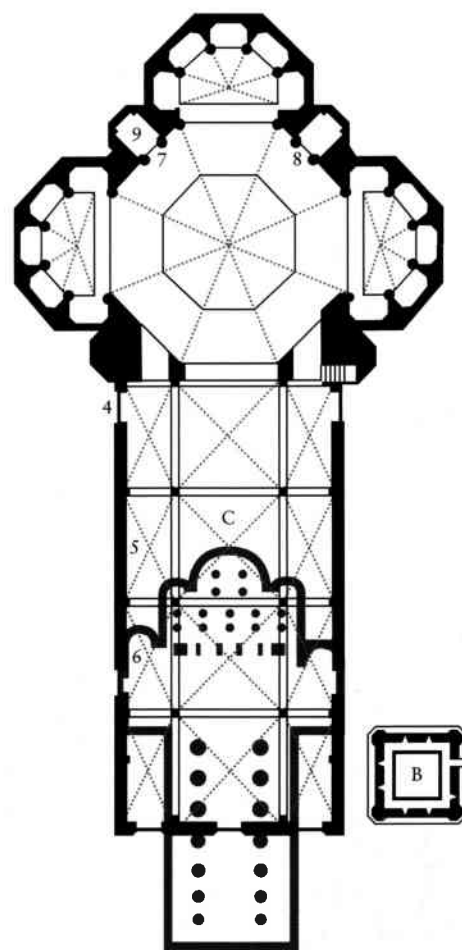
the painters Taddeo Gaddi, Orcagna, and Andrea da Firenze, as well as sculptors and prominent citizens. Model after model for the church was submitted to the commission and accepted or rejected; somehow the work went on, although rejected ideas were often resubmitted. One of these may be the design recorded in Andrea da Firenze's fresco of the *Triumph of the Church* (see fig. 5.1).

It is not completely clear how much, if any, of Arnolfo's original design was kept and how much of the present Duomo can be attributed to the documented activity there of Francesco Talenti, Fra Jacopo Talenti (no relation), Simone Talenti (Francesco's son), and the painters. In 1364, the commission adopted Francesco Talenti's proposals for the piers and cornice, which were embodied in a model constructed in 1367 on the designs of Neri di Fioravante. At that time, the commission ordered the destruction of competing designs and models and absolute adherence to the official project. The final design was a striking compromise between a central plan and a Latin cross. Three polygonal apses, each with five radiating chapels, were to surround an octagonal dome, under which the high altar was to be placed. On the outside, these tribunes were to culminate in semidomes intended to buttress the central dome, but at the time no one knew how a dome of this scale could be engineered and constructed. It has been argued that this later Trecento design follows Arnolfo di Cambio's basic plan, but on a much larger scale.

The interior of the cathedral consists of a majestic nave of four enormous square bays, its lofty arches opening onto side aisles half the width of the nave. The nave leads to the centralized space below the great octagonal dome. The building was planned so that vast crowds could be accommodated for ceremonies at the high altar and the fifteen surrounding chapels. The warm brown stone of the piers, capitals, and other details enhances the interior's imposing simplicity. The Florentine Duomo was not consecrated until 1436, when the dome, apparently first envisioned by Arnolfo di Cambio, was near completion under Filippo Brunelleschi (see figs. 6.7–6.12). In the Italian city-

states the building that housed the government competed in physical bulk and artistic magnificence with the principal churches. Florence was no exception.

Also attributed to Arnolfo is the Palazzo dei Priori (fig. 2.40; the Priori, or Priors, were the principal governing body of Florence). Its tower dominates a whole section of Florence and in popular imagination is grouped with the dome of the cathedral as one of the two quintessential symbols of the city. The palazzo is the largest and also one of the last of the Italian medieval communal palaces to be built. Its front part was erected in only eleven years—an astonishingly short space of time for a building of this scale; later additions to the back did not change the façade. The building fronts a piazza produced by the destruction,

in 1258, of the houses of the traitorous Uberti family, who fled Florence and later fought with the Sienese at the Battle of Montaperti. Their property was confiscated and the Priori declared that no buildings would ever stand there, thus providing for a large open space that set off the new communal palace. Built of *pietra forte*, a tan-colored local stone, the Palazzo dei Priori appears as a gigantic block, divided by stringcourses (narrow horizontal moldings) into a ground floor and two main stories, each of great height, and crowned by powerfully projecting machicolations carried on corbels and culminating in a crenellated parapet. The great tower is placed off-center, perhaps to make use of the foundations of earlier house-towers. It thrusts aggressively forward, out over the corbelled arcade,



2.40. ARNOLFO DI CAMBIO (attributed to). Palazzo dei Priori (now known as Palazzo Vecchio), Florence, on the left. 1299–1310; interior remodeled 1540–65 by the Medici as a family residence. *Pietra forte* (local limestone). On the right is the Loggia della Signoria (now called Loggia dei Lanzi), which is shown in a closer view in fig. 2.41. To the left is the Fountain of Neptune (see figs. 20.24–20.25).

A Florentine citizen entering the Piazza della Signoria from the main street that connects the religious center of Florence, Piazza del Duomo, with this civic center, would have experienced the massive Palazzo dei Priori from a similarly dramatic angle. Documents suggest that when Brunelleschi set out to demonstrate perspective (see p. 162), he used a similar viewpoint, on street level. The Medici were expelled from Florence in 1494, and Donatello's sculpture of *Judith and Holofernes* (see fig. 12.7) was moved to the platform in front of the Palazzo dei Priori, where it was joined in 1504 by Michelangelo's *David* (see fig. 16.1; the figure seen in the illustration is a copy). The Medici returned to the city in 1512, and in 1540 made the former city hall their personal residence. In the later sixteenth century the palace was decorated to accommodate its new function as the family palace (see figs. 20.35–20.36, 20.43–20.44).

2.41. Loggia della Signoria. Built 1376–c. 1381 under the supervision of Benci di Cione and Simone Talenti. *Pietra forte*, with the virtues above executed in marble with colored and gold glass backgrounds. When the sixteenth-century Medici transformed this speakers' platform into a guard station, the name was changed to Loggia dei Lanzi (Loggia of the Lances), by which the loggia is known today. At that time it also became a place for the presentation of sculpture, some of it in support of the Medici regime. Underneath the left arch of the loggia: 🏛 *Perseus and Medusa*, by Benvenuto Cellini (see fig. 20.22); under the right arch: 🏛 *Capture of the Sabine Woman*, by Giovanni Bologna (see figs. 20.29–20.30); to the left is a copy of Michelangelo's *David* (see fig. 16.1), placed on the statue's original site in front of the Palazzo dei Priori.

and terminates in more corbelled machicolations, another crenellated parapet, and a *baldacchino*-like bell enclosure supported on four huge columns.

The roughness of the blocks, which are rusticated as in Roman military architecture, accentuates the brutal power of the massive building. It seems even more impregnable by virtue of the delicacy of the mullioned windows with their trefoil arches, in imitation of French Gothic models. Its simplicity and force, its triumphant assertion of the noble human capacity to govern, were intended to symbolize the victory of civic harmony over the internal strife that tore the republic apart in the late Duecento.

Our final example of early Florentine architecture is the Loggia della Signoria (fig. 2.41). It was built much later, 1376–c. 1381, as a speakers' platform, ostensibly to protect the city's republican representatives when they were speaking to the citizenry gathered in the Piazza della Signoria, the city's largest open public space. In the sixteenth century the Medici would take this symbol of Florentine republicanism and transform it into a guard station, making it clear that republican notions would not be tolerated in the Medici grand duchy. When built, the loggia's grand rounded arches would have expressed the power of the city's governing bodies; that the popular Gothic style was avoided in this civic structure may be a reference to the ancient Roman origins of the city. The numerous small lions at the bases of the piers were symbols of the republic, and the virtues represented in the spandrels expressed the kind of behavior expected of the city's elected officials.

# FLORENTINE ART OF THE EARLY TRECENTO

In the early Trecento, a new style of painting emerged that revolutionized the art of Florence, Tuscany, and eventually that of the entire Western world. The man who initiated this new style is Giotto di Bondone (c. 1277–1337).

## Giotto

The importance of Giotto was not lost on his contemporaries. The *Chronicle* of Giovanni Villani, written a few years after Giotto's death, rated him among the great personalities of the day. The writer Giovanni Boccaccio claimed that Giotto had "brought back to light" the art of painting "that for many centuries had been buried under the errors of some who painted more to delight the eyes of the ignorant than to please the intellect of the wise" (*Decameron*, VI, 5). Later, in his treatise *On Poetry*, Boccaccio compared Giotto to the ancient Greek painter Apelles, about whose works he had read in the writings of Pliny.

In a passage from the *Divine Comedy* (XI, 94–96), Dante tells of an encounter in purgatory with the miniaturist Oderisi da Gubbio, who compares his fall from popularity with that of Cimabue as an example of the transience of worldly fame. Dante writes that it was Giotto who stole Cimabue's fame: "O empty glory of human powers! ... Cimabue thought to hold the field in painting, and now Giotto has the cry, so that the former's fame is dim." Dante compared Giotto's success to that of the poet Guido Cavalcanti, inventor of the *dolce stil nuovo* (sweet or beautiful new style), whose poetry, written in the Tuscan dialect rather than the customary Latin, chased his competitors from the field.

Dante's statement about the change in taste from Cimabue to Giotto is true. Soon after Giotto established his style in Florence, the Byzantinizing manner of Cimabue was no longer practiced. Florentine painters began to imitate Giotto's style, which also spread to other centers in Tuscany, including Siena, and then up and down the Adriatic coast, capturing one provincial school after another. It met resistance only in Venice, which was strongly tied to the Greek East, and in Piedmont and Lombardy, where the Northern Gothic style was a potent influence. Giotto's new direction remained dominant into the Quattrocento, when Renaissance artists and writers insisted that Giotto was their true artistic ancestor. At few other moments in the history of painting has a single artist's work led to so rapid, widespread, and complete a change.

What was this new style? Cennino Cennini, who claimed to have been the pupil of Agnolo Gaddi (himself the son and pupil of Taddeo Gaddi, one of Giotto's closest followers), declared that Giotto had translated painting from Greek (by which he meant Byzantine) into Latin. In the sixteenth century, Vasari wrote that Giotto had abandoned the "rude manner" of the Greeks and, since he continued to "derive from Nature, he deserves to be called the pupil of Nature and no other." In exalting Giotto, Vasari ignored the fact that Cimabue and the Sienese painter Duccio (see Chapter 4) had already transformed the Byzantine style. To Trecento commentators, naturalism was equated with Latinity, which meant ancient Roman culture. For his contemporaries and successors the virtue of Giotto's style seems to have been based in its fidelity to the human, natural, Italian world they knew, as against the artificial manner from the Byzantine East. Although Cennini never wrote that Giotto drew from posed models,

*Opposite:* 3.1. GIOTTO. Fresco. Arena Chapel, Padua. This fresco appears over the entrance door.
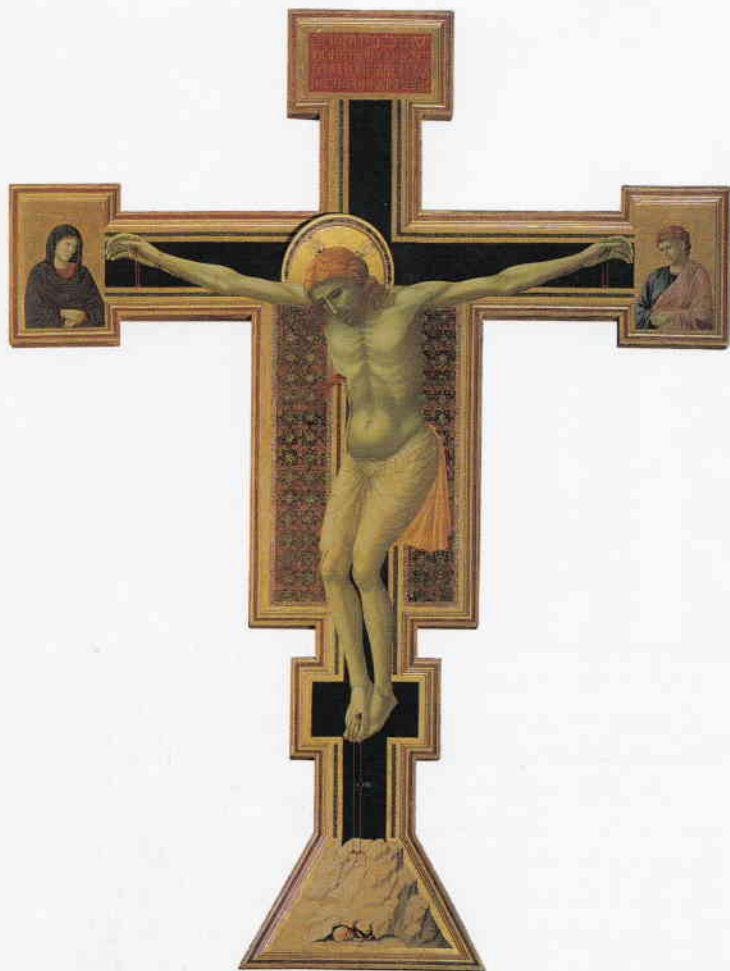
3.2. GIOTTO. *Crucifix*. c. 1295. Panel, 19' × 13'4" (5.8 × 4 m). Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. In 1568 Vasari wrote that Giotto "became so good an imitator of nature that he banished completely the rude Greek [i.e., Byzantine] manner and revived the modern and good art of painting, introducing the portraying well from nature of living people, which had not been used for more than two hundred years."

Villani suggested this when he referred to Giotto as "he who drew every figure and action from nature."

The surviving work of Italy's early Trecento painters represents only a fraction of what they must actually have painted. As we read Vasari's accounts of Giotto's output—remembering that some of the paintings he mentions may have been by other artists—we realize how little now remains of what Giotto produced during the course of his life. He reportedly worked throughout Tuscany, northern Italy, and the Kingdom of Naples, including its capital, then ruled by a French dynasty. Giotto was said to have traveled to France to work in Avignon, the new seat of the papacy after 1305, a possibility that is supported by the French contacts evident in his style. Commercial relations between Florence and all parts of Europe were so routine during the Trecento that we cannot deny the possibility of

a trip to France for so prosperous and acclaimed an artist as Giotto.

Whether or not he studied with Cimabue in Florence, as Vasari claimed, the older painter played little part in the formation of Giotto's style. The dominant influences seem to have been several: ancient Roman sculpture, the sculpture of the Pisano family, the paintings of Pietro Cavallini, French sculpture seen either in France or through small, imported works, and—perhaps most importantly—nature.

During most of the Duecento, Florence and its territory had been the scene of warfare between the Guelphs, who favored the pope, and the Ghibellines, who were loosely attached to the Holy Roman Emperor. In reality, this was a class conflict; the Ghibellines were the feudal nobility, and they and their supporters looked to the emperor to maintain their traditional power. The Florentine Guelphs were mostly artisans and merchants who had succeeded in establishing guilds by the Ordinances of Justice in 1293; these regulations disenfranchised nobles unless they were willing to adopt a trade and join a guild. An attempt by the nobles to regain power was put down in 1302, and hundreds of Ghibellines, including Dante, were exiled. The art of Giotto emerged within the context of the prosperous commercial and artisan class, emphasizing measure, balance, order, and the drama that develops between human beings who live and work at close quarters.

A comparison of a restored *Crucifix* now widely accepted as one of Giotto's earliest works (fig. 3.2) with Cimabue's *Crucifix* at Santa Croce (see figs. 2.11–2.12) is instructive. The basic design of the two works is the same, with the body of Christ isolated against the decorated, traditional frame, and half-length figures of the Virgin and John the Evangelist in the side terminals. But Giotto has replaced the abstracted Byzantine segmentation of bodies, heads, and hands with three-dimensional forms modeled in light. While the flowing, two-dimensional pattern of Cimabue's Christ is locked into a composition of horizontals, verticals, and decorative patterns, the body of Giotto's Christ is profoundly three-dimensional and seems to be hanging in space in front of the cross. Christ's head falls forward, while his lower body seems to fall back against the cross. His mouth falls open, exposing his lower teeth, his hair falls naturally to the side of his face, and the nails force his hands to cup the surrounding space. The physicality of Giotto's very human Christ—truly a *Christus mortuus*—draws an empathetic response from the viewer.

THE ARENA CHAPEL. During this period Padua, a university city not far from Venice, regained its republican independence. In 1300 a wealthy Paduan merchant, Enrico Scrovegni, notorious for loaning money at exorbitant rates of interest, acquired the ruins of an ancient Roman arena

on which a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Annunciate was located. Three years after acquiring the site for his palace, Scrovegni began building a new chapel, probably in the hope of atoning for the usury he and his father had committed. In 1305 the chapel was consecrated, and copies of the chapel's frescoes are found in a manuscript dated to 1306. From the start, apparently, Scrovegni thought of commissioning Giotto, who, according to one account, was *satis iuvenis* ("fairly young"), to paint the interior. In the past Giotto was often given complete credit for planning the cycle, but it is likely that theological advisers and perhaps also the patron played an important role in the development of this complex intellectual program. Although he undoubtedly had assistants working with him, Giotto certainly painted the principal figures of each scene.

The Arena Chapel frescoes represent Giotto's greatest achievement (figs. 3.1, 3.3–3.5). Their state of preservation is astonishing, especially given that an Allied bomb narrowly missed the chapel during World War II. Since the chapel was attached to the palace on the north side, there are windows on the south only. These were kept small to provide as much wall space as possible for the frescoes, which are designed in three superimposed rows. To separate each scene, Giotto designed frames that form a continuous structure of simulated architecture. The vault is painted the same unifying blue as the background color in the frescoes—naturally enough, since vaults and domes were traditionally held to be symbolic of heaven, and documents show that an interior vault was often referred to as *il cielo* ("the sky"). The chapel's vault is dotted with gold
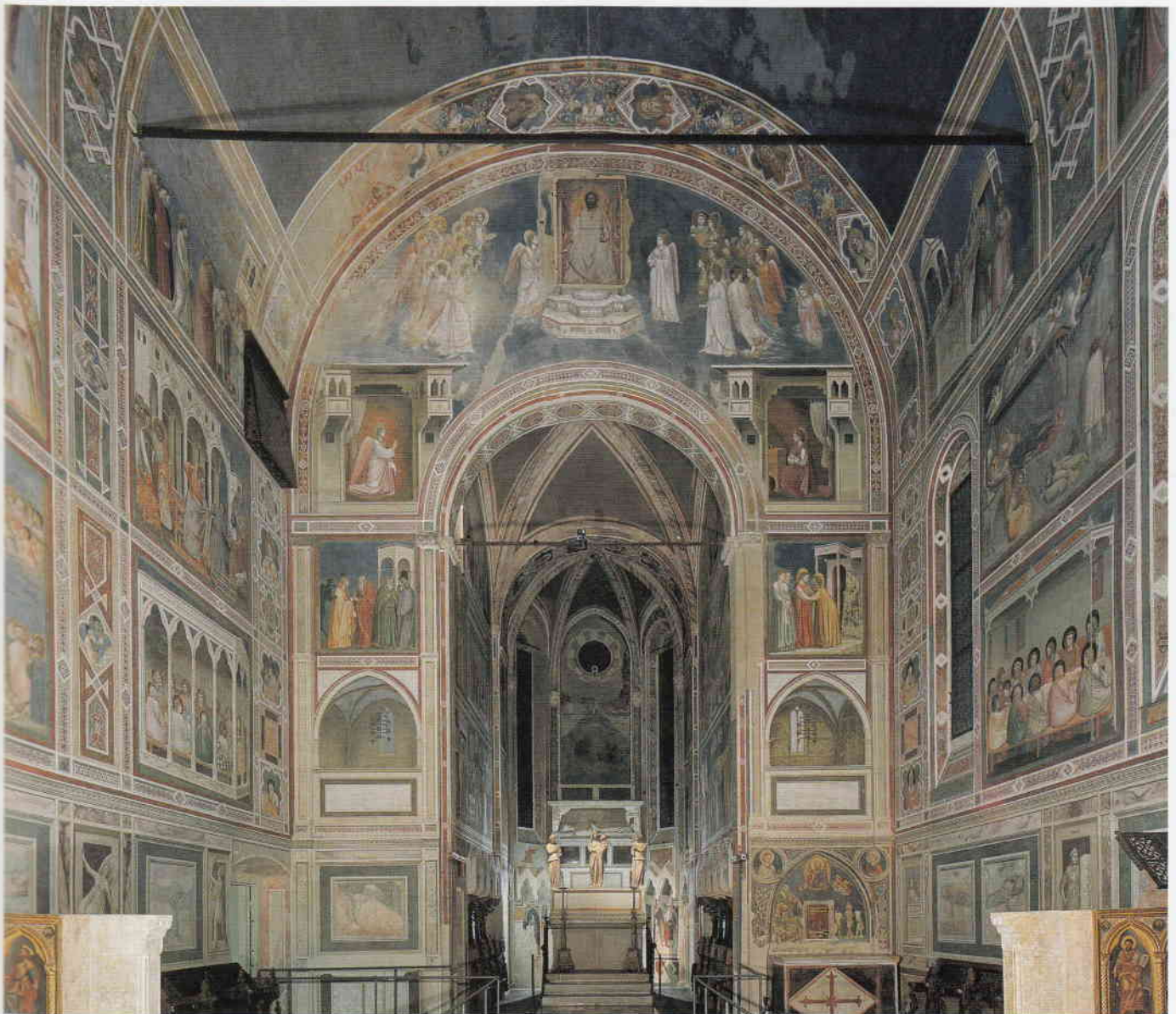


3.3. GIOTTO. Fresco cycle. Arena Chapel, Padua. c. 1302–1305. Commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni.

stars, while figures of Christ, the Virgin, the four Evangelists, and four prophets appear in circular frames that seem to pierce the sky to reveal the golden glory of heaven beyond (see fig. 3.1).

The chapel is dedicated to the Virgin of Charity. The bands of paintings illustrate the lives of the Virgin and Christ in thirty-eight framed scenes (figs. 3.4–3.5). The episodes chosen emphasize the role of the Virgin in Christ's life as related in the *Golden Legend* by the thirteenth-century Genoese bishop Jacobus de Voragine. Narration begins on the upper level, to the right of the entrance to the sanctuary, with the events of the lives of Joachim and Anna, Mary's parents. The early life of the Virgin is represented on the left top register and continues with the *Annunciation*, with Gabriel and Mary on either side of the chancel arch; above we see the unusual scene of God the Father sending Gabriel on his mission to Mary. On the second level, the infancy of Christ begins on the right-hand wall and culminates in his adult mission, on the left. On the lowest tier, the earlier scenes of the Passion of Christ on the right are followed on the left by his Crucifixion and subsequent events. The level below is treated like wainscoting, with panels painted in imitation of marble alternating with images of the Seven Virtues (on the right) and the Seven Vices (on the left), painted in grisaille as if they were stone sculptures. This drama of human salvation comes to a climax in the *Last Judgment*, which covers the entrance wall (see fig. 3.1).
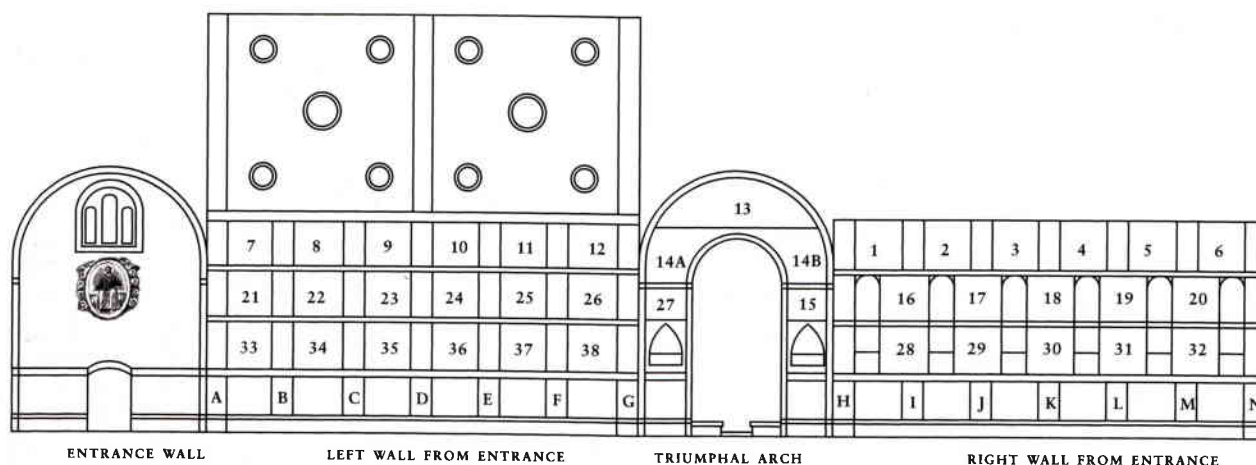


3.4. Iconographic diagram of Giotto's fresco cycle at the Arena Chapel, Padua. Computerized reconstruction by Sarah Loyd Cameron, after Flores d'Arcais.

LIVES OF JOACHIM AND ANNA: 1. *Joachim Expelled from the Temple*; 2. *Joachim Takes Refuge in the Wilderness* (see fig. 3.6); 3. *Annunciation to Anna*; 4. *Sacrifice of Joachim*; 5. *Dream of Joachim*; 6. *Meeting at the Golden Gate* (see fig. 3.7).

EARLY LIFE OF THE VIRGIN MARY: 7. *Birth of the Virgin*; 8. *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*; 9. *Suitors Presenting the Rods* (see fig. 3.5); 10. *Prayer Before the Rods* (see fig. 3.5); 11. *Marriage of Mary and Joseph*; 12. *Wedding Procession*; 13. *God's Mission to Gabriel*; 14A. & 14B. *Annunciation* (see figs. 3.8–3.9); 15. *Visitation*.

LIFE OF CHRIST: 16. *Nativity and Annunciation to the Shepherds* (see fig. 3.10); 17. *Adoration of the Magi*; 18. *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*; 19. *Flight into Egypt*; 20. *Massacre of the Innocents*; 21. *Christ Disputing with the Doctors in the Temple*; 22. *Baptism of Christ*; 23. *Marriage Feast at Cana* (see fig. 3.5); 24. *Raising of Lazarus* (see fig. 3.11); 25. *Entry into Jerusalem*; 26. *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple*; 27. *Judas Receiving the Blood Money from the High Priests of the Temple*; 28. *Last Supper*; 29. *Washing of the Feet*; 30. *Kiss of Judas* (see fig. 3.12); 31. *Jesus before Caiaphas*; 32. *Crowning with Thorns*; 33. *Christ Carrying the Cross*; 34. *Crucifixion*; 35. *Lamentation* (see fig. 3.13); 36. *Noli Me Tangere* (see fig. 3.5); 37. *Ascension of Christ*; 38. *Pentecost*.

SEVEN VICES: A. *Despair*; B. *Envy*; C. *Infidelity* (see fig. 3.5); D. *Injustice* (see fig. 3.16); E. *Anger* (see fig. 3.5); F. *Inconstancy* (see fig. 3.17); G. *Folly*.

SEVEN VIRTUES: H. *Prudence*; I. *Fortitude*; J. *Temperance*; K. *Justice* (see fig. 3.15); L. *Faith*; M. *Charity*; N. *Hope*.

ENTRANCE WALL: *Last Judgment*, with *Enrico Scrovegni Offering the Model of the Chapel to the Virgin Mary* (see figs. 3.1, 3.14).

*Opposite*: 3.5. GIOTTO. Arena Chapel, Padua. Portion of the left (north) wall. Frescoes in the top register: *Suitors Presenting the Rods* and the *Prayer Before the Rods*; middle register: *Marriage Feast at Cana* and *Raising of Lazarus*; lower register: *Lamentation* and *Noli Me Tangere*; bottom: figures of the vices of *Infidelity*, *Injustice*, and *Anger*.

Giotto's narration has been compared to that of the cinema because of his sense of timing as scene follows scene. Most observers entering the chapel probably do not immediately recognize the element of time, but they are aware that they have stepped into a world of order and balance. Clear light, simply defined masses, and beautiful glowing color characterize Giotto's style. In the nineteenth century, the critic John Ruskin described this color as "the April freshness of Giotto."

Italian documents contain no word for "scene;" the word used is *storie* ("stories"). In Giotto's frescoed cycle, we can follow the plot in each *storia*, usually accompanied by one or two subplots, as we move through the series. In an incident from the life of the Virgin, for example (fig. 3.6), the aged Joachim has been expelled from the temple because he and his wife are childless, and he is taking refuge with shepherds in the wilderness. The composition is based on the human relationships among the figures. Humiliation overcomes Joachim, and the youthful shepherds accept him reluctantly; one looks toward the other, attempting to gauge his friend's response

and judge whether it is safe to take in this outcast. The landscape frames and accentuates this tense moment. Then comes the subplot: the sheep pour out of their fold, and the dog, symbol of fidelity, leaps upward in recognition of the role Joachim will play in sacred history.

The landscape is powerfully projected but deliberately restricted in scope. Writing in the late Trecento, Cennini suggested that in order to paint a landscape, it is necessary only for the artist to set up some rocks in the *bottega* to stand for mountains and a few branches for a forest. Yet Giotto's rocky backgrounds form an effective stage setting for his dramas, and in later scenes that take place in the same spot he did not hesitate to rearrange the rocks to bring out the meaning of the moment. The rocks enclose a distinct space that is ultimately limited, as in all the scenes, by the continuous blue background. There are no clouds and no suggestion of other atmospheric phenomena, except where they are needed to indicate the celestial origin of the angels. He often, however, suggested a slightly broader or more distant space: trees are shown cut off by rocks, so that we read them as growing on the other side



3.6. GIOTTO. *Joachim Takes Refuge in the Wilderness.* Fresco, 6'6¾" × 6'7⅞" (2 × 1.85 m). Arena Chapel, Padua.

of the hill, for example, and his figures sometimes appear or disappear behind the frame at the sides of scenes. Within the shallow box of space defined by the rocks, the figures stand forth in three dimensions like columns. Giotto's drapery is simplified to bring out the cylindrical mass of the figures, whose profile, one-quarter, and even back views replace the customary three-quarter profile of figures found in Duecento painting. The head of the shepherd to the right in *Joachim Takes Refuge in the Wilderness* is foreshortened in space. According to Vasari, Giotto was the first artist to render forms in foreshortening.

Cennini's recommendation that distant objects should be painted darker than those in the foreground must have been another convention derived from Giotto: the foremost leaves on Giotto's trees are lighter than those farther away. In subtle gradations, Giotto's light models faces, drapery, rocks, and trees with a delicacy that establishes their existence in space. However, Giotto's light is not derived from a single source. A uniform illumination bathes all scenes alike, regardless of the time of day, and this helps maintain the unity of the chapel. As a whole, Giotto's light, having no specific origin, casts no shadows. With few exceptions, cast shadows do not appear in painting until the Quattrocento, yet we can hardly imagine that Trecento painters were unaware of them. In a famous passage in the *Inferno,* one of the damned asks who Dante is, since he—unlike the dead—casts a shadow. This is only one example from a rich medieval tradition of literature on light and its behavior, but for some reason painters did not consider natural light effects suitable for representation.

The final scene of this first group is the *Meeting at the Golden Gate* (fig. 3.7). Joachim has received a revelation



3.7. GIOTTO. *Meeting at the Golden Gate.* Fresco, 6'6¾" × 6'7⅞" (2 × 1.85 m). Arena Chapel, Padua.
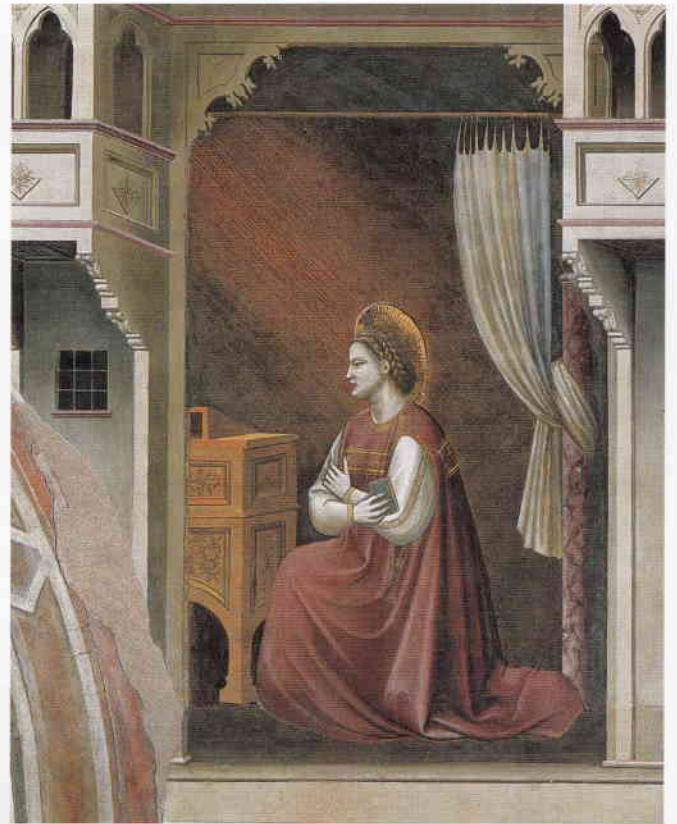
3.8, 3.9. GIOTTO. *Annunciation*. Fresco, each 6'4¾" × 4'11" (1.95 × 1.5 m). Arena Chapel, Padua. See also fig. 3.3.

from an angel that his wife, Anna, will bear a child, and he returns to Jerusalem to tell her, just as she rushes out to break her identical news to him. Their encounter occurs on a bridge outside the Golden Gate of Jerusalem. Like the rocks in Giotto's landscapes, a few simple architectural elements symbolize a complex reality. Trecento convention explains the disparity in scale between Giotto's figures and the painted architecture. Architecture is large in relation to people, and to apply the same scale to both would mean reducing the figures to a point where the narrative would become too small to be read or limiting the architecture to the lower portions of buildings. Giotto and his followers were content with rendering a double scale that presented the story within a reduced architectural setting.

In this case, the architecture focuses attention on the emotions of the figures. In this joyous reunion of a husband and wife sharing precious news, Anna puts one hand around Joachim's head, drawing his face toward hers for a long embrace. As always, Giotto's draftsmanship is broad and simple, leaving out details that might interrupt his message of human feeling or the powerful clarity of his form. One subplot can be sensed in the happy neighbors; another appears in the shepherd who carries Joachim's belongings.

Turning to the events directly connected with the life of Christ, we find the *Annunciation* (figs. 3.8–3.9) on the chancel arch. Its position reflects a tradition in Byzantine art in which the chancel arch symbolized the entrance to the sanctuary of the temple, which is described with its gate shut by the prophet Ezekiel: "And no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same" (Ezekiel 44:2–3). To Christian theologians, this closed gate *(porta clausa)*, which only the Lord entered and left, was a symbol of Mary's virginity; the prince was Christ and the bread the Eucharist. Giotto's choice of cusped Gothic arches for the balconies on either side is important, for throughout the chapel Giotto used the older round Romanesque arch to refer to the Old Law and the modern pointed Gothic arch as a symbol for the New Testament. Here, at the moment of Christ's conception, we see, appropriately, the first Gothic arches in the cycle.

Giotto represented the Annunciation, Christ's incarnation in human form, in a new way that communicates his understanding of the human experience. He stressed the moment in which Mary accepts her responsibility, when

she says: "Be it done to me according to thy word." To indicate her agreement, she crosses her hands upon her chest and kneels; in earlier Byzantine examples, Mary had always been represented as standing. A flood of light, painted with a soft orange-yellow pigment, descends on the figure of the Virgin. This suggests actual light, not golden rays (even though the haloes are still rendered as gold disks). Since there are no sources of natural light in Giotto's art, this must be the light of heaven. Light was (and is) identified mystically with Christ: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. … That is the true Light which lights every man who comes into the world" (John 1:4, 9).

The limited spaces into which Giotto placed Gabriel and Mary were probably derived from stage constructions used in earlier Paduan dramatizations of the Annunciation.

Such re-enactments started at the local cathedral and culminated in performances in the Arena Chapel. Following convention, Giotto removed the front walls to show the interiors.

Before Giotto, Italian artists had almost always placed the Nativity in a cave, a Byzantine tradition. The biblical account, however, specifies no precise setting. In the Arena Chapel, Giotto, perhaps under the influence of French Gothic developments, depicted the scene in a shed (fig. 3.10). He also eliminated the scene of the baby's bath common in Byzantine-inspired representations (see fig. 4.4). Here a midwife hands the Christ Child, already washed and wrapped, to Mary, while the animals look on in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib" (Isaiah



3.10. GIOTTO. *Nativity and Annunciation to the Shepherds*. Fresco, 6'6¾" × 6'7⅞" (2 × 1.85 m). Arena Chapel, Padua.

1:3). One shepherd has turned his back to us—a seemingly simple device that reveals Giotto's new attitude toward space: he could turn and move his figures in any direction. Giotto's backs, moreover, can be expressive: the shepherd's astonishment is evident in the set of his shoulders, the way his head tilts back, and how he pulls his garment more tightly around him.

The adult Christ in the *Raising of Lazarus* (fig. 3.11) is the short-bearded Christ of French Gothic tradition, as at Amiens Cathedral (see fig. 2.25). He appears more natural than the Byzantine type favored by Coppo and Cimabue. Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, prostrate themselves before Christ in supplication, while he calls their brother from the dead with a simple gesture. Giotto included the

figures who cover their noses mentioned in the biblical text ("by this time he stinketh," John 11:39). The scene is divided into simple blocks of figures by broad diagonals, verticals, and rhythmic curves.

Giotto again used a figure's back as an expressive device in the workman on the right. The pale pea-green of his robe has rust-colored shadows, the formula for which was recorded in Cennini's handbook. A striking bit of coloristic freedom appears in the veined marble of the tomb slab. The blue of several garments, including that of Christ, was rendered in a pigment that, Cennini said, could not be painted in true fresco and therefore had to be added *a secco*. As a result of peeling, the underlying painting has been partially revealed. On this, the north wall, Gothic
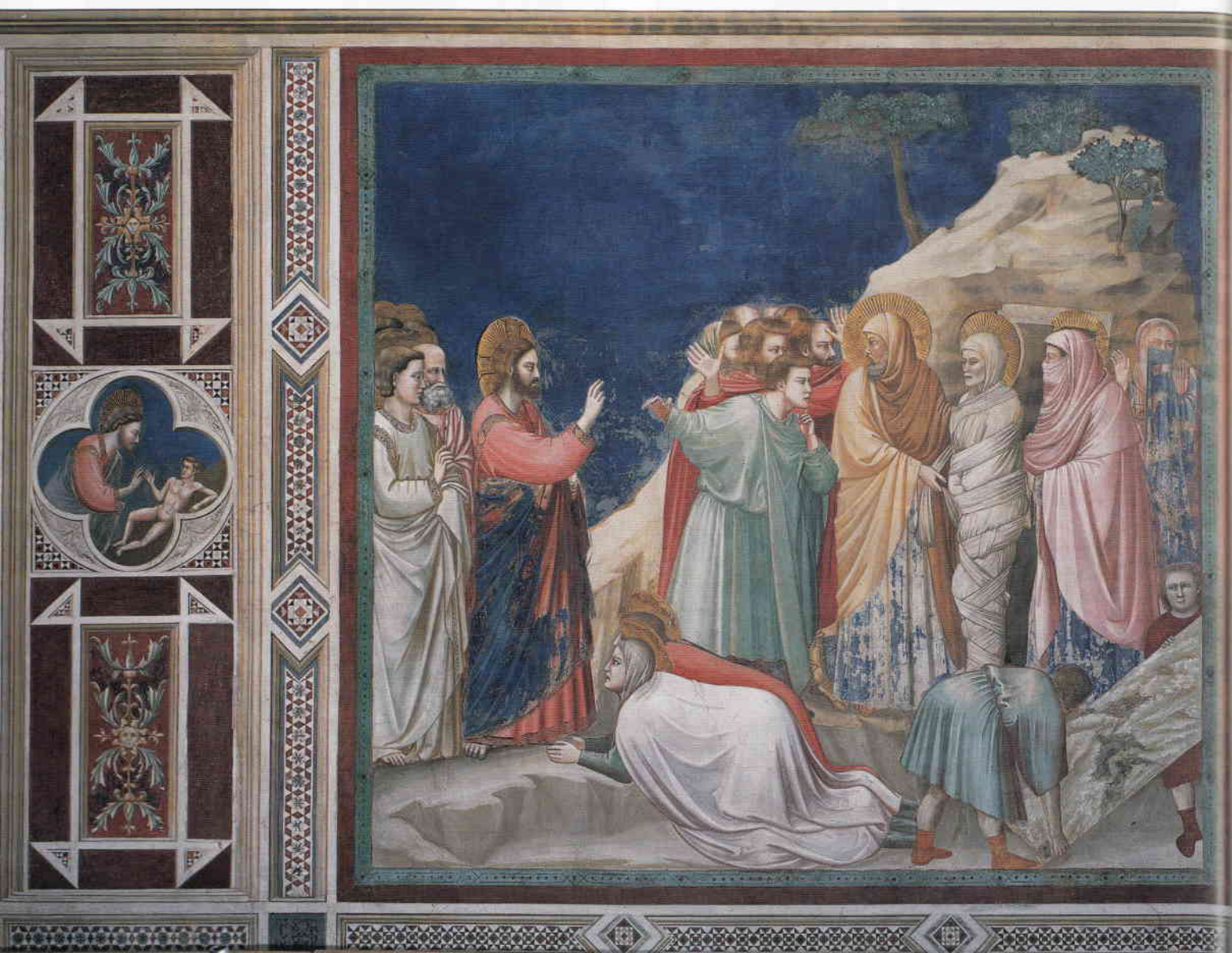


3.11. GIOTTO. *Raising of Lazarus*. Fresco, 6'6¾" × 6'7⅞" (2 × 1.85 m). Arena Chapel, Padua. The small scene in the quatrefoil to the left is the *Creation of Adam*. See also fig. 3.5.

quatrefoils frame smaller scenes that act as commentaries on the large scenes of Christ's life. In this case the Old Testament scene of God creating Adam is a fitting parallel for Christ raising Lazarus.

In the *Kiss of Judas* (fig. 3.12), Giotto followed the conventional composition of the narrative. Christ's body almost disappears in the sweep of Judas's cloak, but he stands as firmly as he did in the *Raising of Lazarus*, and with the same calm gaze. Giotto exploited the contrast between Christ's profile and the rather bestial features of Judas, whose lips are pursed for the treacherous kiss. These details express the age-old confrontation between good and evil. The contrast is made even more striking since, in the preceding scene of the *Last Supper*, Judas had the same handsome, youthful face as some of the other apostles. But the Gospel account tells us that the devil entered into Judas when he dipped his bread in the wine at the Last Supper (John 13:27; see p. 272). Giotto heightens the drama in this scene by inserting the faces of two Roman soldiers between the profiles of Judas and Christ.

Two subplots flank the main group. To the left is the episode of Peter cutting off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant, which iconographic tradition required. Giotto virtually concealed the event behind the hulking back of a hooded attendant, who tries to restrain one of the fleeing apostles. On the right, the high priest points toward the treacherous embrace in the center, yet he seems to vacillate as he does so, as if unable to face the wickedness of Judas's betrayal. Note that Christ's halo, modeled in plaster, is foreshortened and seems to recede into space. The swords, halberds, and torches were painted *a secco* and have mostly peeled off, dissipating some of the composition's original effect, but the manner in which these
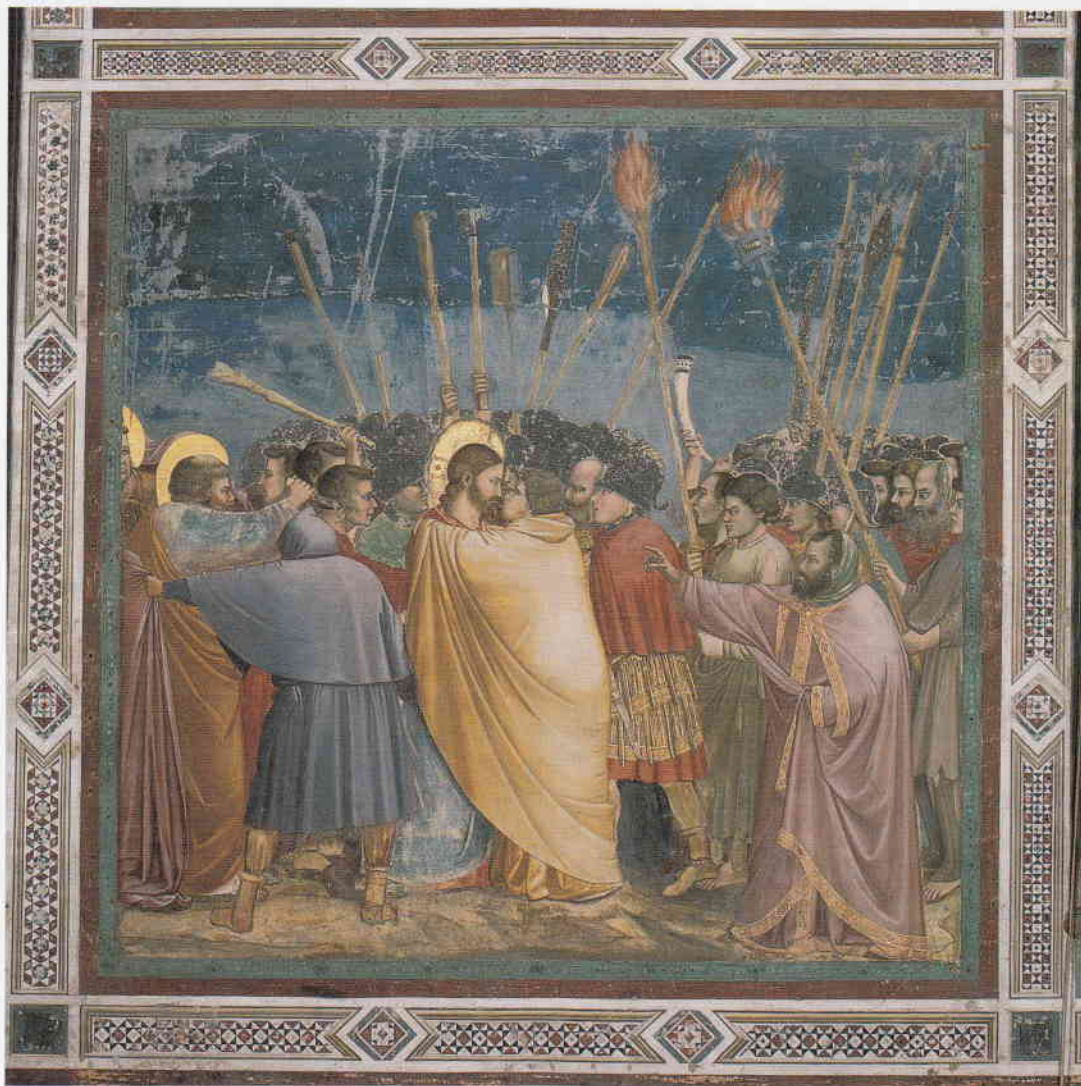


3.12. GIOTTO. *Kiss of Judas.* Fresco, 6'6¾" × 6'7⅞" (2 × 1.85 m). Arena Chapel, Padua.

3.13. GIOTTO. *Lamentation.* Fresco, 6'6¾" × 6'⅞" (2 × 1.85 m). Arena Chapel, Padua. The small scene in the quatrefoil to the left is *Jonah Being Swallowed by the Whale*, which was interpreted by theologians as an Old Testament parallel to this period in the life of Christ. See also fig. 3.5.

weapons converge to focus our attention on the faces of the two protagonists increases the effect of climactic drama.

The *Lamentation* (fig. 3.13; see fig. 3.5), like the *Kiss of Judas*, follows in its most general outlines the traditional Byzantine type (see fig. 2.5) common in Duecento Italy (see figs. 2.4, 2.7). The dead Christ is stretched across the lap of Mary, his head upheld by a mourning figure seen only from the back, while another holds up one of his hands. Mary Magdalen gazes down at his feet. John the Evangelist stands with arms outstretched, and the long line of the barren rock behind him leads the eye back down to the intimate interchange between Mary and Christ. The angels here move discordantly, twisting and turning first toward us, then away, while the drapery lines of the main figures draw our attention downward, toward the earth. Here and there Giotto's startling use of color is visible: note the apostle to the far right, whose green cloak has plum-colored shadows.

The scenes of the cycle were selected and arranged to bring out underlying theological and dramatic relation-ships. The scene that follows the *Lamentation*, for example, is the *Noli Me Tangere* (see fig. 3.5), which shows the moment after the Resurrection when Mary Magdalene sees Christ near his tomb, and he tells her that she should not touch him ("Noli me tangere"). As Christ moves away from Mary to express this idea, part of his figure disappears behind Giotto's painted border. While the composition of the *Lamentation* has a focal point in the lower left corner, dragging the viewer's eyes downward and stopping the left-to-right narrative flow, the placement of Christ to the far right in the subsequent scene jump-starts the narrative again. Above the *Noli Me Tangere* is the *Raising of Lazarus*, a scene of resurrection that parallels that of Christ below it.

The *Last Judgment* (see fig. 3.1) fills the entire entrance wall, except for the window, around which Giotto deployed ranks of angels. On either side of the window, archangels roll away the sun, the moon, and the heavens like a scroll (Isaiah 34:4; Revelation 6:14), revealing the golden gates of paradise. In the center of the wall, Christ,

wearing his seamless robe, appears as judge. His throne and the great mandorla that surrounds him are made up of colored feathers graduated in color and tone like the wings of Duecento angels. Whereas Coppo's terrifying judge (see fig. 2.9) stares impassively, Giotto's compassionate Christ averts his face from the damned and seems to betray grief over their fate. The apostles are enthroned to the sides. Below, the dead rise from their graves and are welcomed into heaven or consigned to hell. The *Divine Comedy*, begun by Dante at approximately this time, would provide later painters with an inexhaustible supply of details about the torments of hell, but Giotto here represented a limited number of punishments. The explicit physical torment suffered by some of the sinners is unforgettable. A monk is hung by his tongue, for example, while the woman next to him is suspended by her hair. One figure is being turned on a spit, while a trussed woman has hot lead poured into her mouth. A devil uses tongs to squeeze the penis of one sinner. Although these figures are small, their individual suffering is clearly visible to the observer standing in the

chapel. Rivers of red and orange fire flow from the throne of Christ to engulf the damned. The physical nature of many of the punishments seems consistent with Giotto's interest in naturalism and human experience.

Over the door of the chapel, angels hold the cross of Christ. Kneeling below are Enrico Scrovegni and an Augustinian monk (fig. 3.14), who together hold a model of the Arena Chapel as Scrovegni's offering. These two portraits and others found within the ranks of the blessed are early examples of the interest in portraiture that will emerge in the fifteenth century; perhaps a self-portrait of Giotto and portraits of his assistants are included among the blessed. Enrico Scrovegni would have been recognizable to contemporary Paduans; one wonders what their reactions were to the placement of this notorious usurer among the blessed. The identity of the figures who stand behind the model of the chapel has been a matter of controversy, but the central one is certainly the Virgin Mary, to whom the chapel was dedicated; her extended hand suggest that Scrovegni's offering would be acceptable to her.



3.14. GIOTTO. *Enrico Scrovegni Offering the Model of the Arena Chapel to the Virgin Mary*, detail of *Last Judgment* (see fig. 3.1). Arena Chapel, Padua.

3.15, 3.16, 3.17. GIOTTO. *Justice, Injustice* (see fig. 3.5), and *Inconstancy*. Fresco, each 47¼ × 21⅝" (120 × 55 cm). Arena Chapel, Padua.

The virtues and vices on the lower sections of the walls recall a tradition common in French Gothic portal sculpture. *Justice* (fig. 3.15) is a regal female figure before whom commerce, agriculture, and travel proceed undisturbed. Her male counterpart, *Injustice* (fig. 3.16), is a robber baron (reminding us that Padua and Florence were merchant republics organized against the nobility), who, from his castle gates surrounded by rocks and forests, presides over rape and murder. The vice of *Inconstancy* (fig. 3.17) tilts on a precarious wheel, losing the very balance that for Giotto was an essential aspect of human existence. The painted marble panels that surround them (see fig. 3.5) offer beautiful patterns and reveal the skill of Giotto and his workshop at *trompe l'oeil* painting.

**THE OGNISSANTI MADONNA.** The *Enthroned Madonna with Saints* (fig. 3.18), painted for the Church of Ognissanti (All Saints), was probably executed between 1305 and 1310. The gabled shape is similar to that of Duccio's *Madonna and Child* for the Laudesi (see fig. 4.1), Cimabue's *Enthroned Madonna and Child* (see fig. 2.10), and other Duecento altarpieces. Giotto placed the Virgin on a Gothic throne, similar to that of *Justice* in the Arena Chapel. With its pointed vault, delicate gable ornamented

with crockets, and open wings, the throne provides a cubic space for the Madonna that is utterly different from the elaborate Byzantine thrones of the Duecento. Narrow panels are filled with delicate ornament that contrasts with the abstract forms of the marble veining, which are fluid and brilliant in color. The Virgin gazes outward with the calm dignity we expect from Giotto, but her lips are parted to give the effect of the natural passage of breath. Compared to earlier Duecento Madonnas, Giotto's *Madonna* expresses stability and warm humanity. Christ lifts his right hand in a gesture of teaching, holds the scroll in his left, and opens his mouth as if speaking.

As in the *Crucifix* and the frescoes, Giotto has abandoned the anatomical compartmentalization of the Italo-Byzantine style. The delicate forms of the stone throne enhance the suggestion of massive bodies placed in depth. The robust Christ Child is lightly but firmly held by his mother, whose fingertips press against his waist. Her right hand is sculptural in its apparent roundness, and the round neckline of the tunic enhances the cylindrical shape of her neck. Christ's massive head turns in space, completely hiding the right ear from sight.

On each side of the throne saints are grouped with angels, and all are smaller in scale than Mary, Queen of

3.18. GIOTTO. *Enthroned Madonna with Saints (Ognissanti Madonna).* c. 1305–10. Panel, 10'8" × 6'8¼" (3.25 × 2 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned for the high altar of the Church of Ognissanti in Florence.

Heaven. The two foremost standing angels hold a crown and a box. They are in profile, as are the kneeling angels before the throne who present vases of lilies and roses, symbols of the Virgin. The clarity of their profiles is strikingly similar to that of Giovanni Pisano's *Madonna* made for the Arena Chapel (see fig. 2.32). They look awestruck, suggesting that they are participants in a heavenly scene.

**THE BARDI AND PERUZZI CHAPELS.** After the fresco cycle in Padua and the *Ognissanti Madonna*, Giotto's style underwent a change. Of the four fresco cycles he and his *bottega* painted in the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce in Florence, only two examples survive, in the chapels of the Bardi and Peruzzi, families who controlled Italy's two greatest banking houses (fig. 3.19). Both appear to date from the 1320s, a period of turmoil during
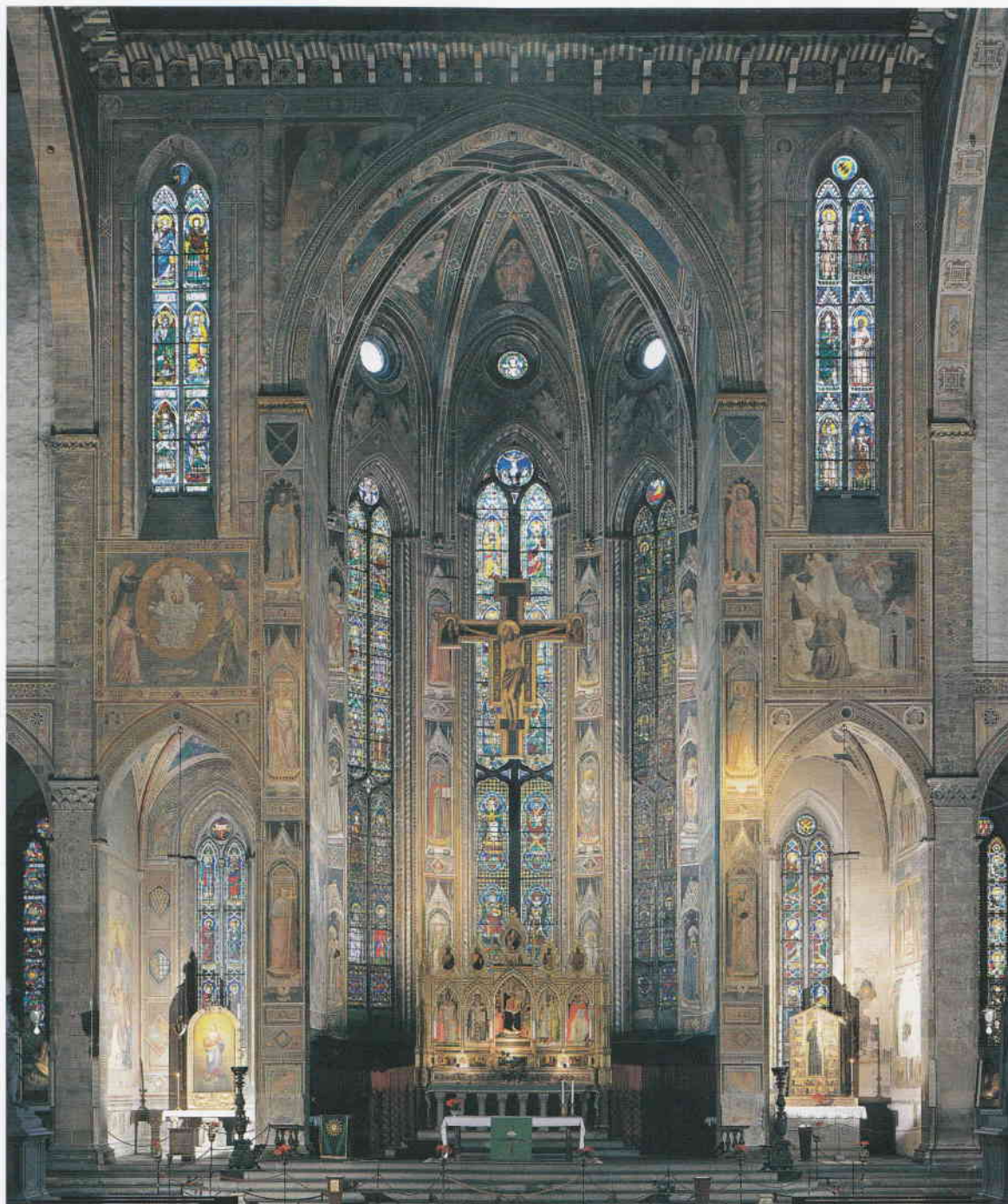


3.19. View of the interior of the Franciscan Church of Sta. Croce in Florence. A fresco cycle of 1388–93 by Agnolo Gaddi (see fig. 5.11) surrounds the high altar in the center, and the fresco cycle of the Bardi Chapel by Giotto (see figs. 3.20–3.23) is to the right.

which the popular government was threatened from within, while attacks from the Ghibelline forces of Pisa and Lucca reduced the republic's territory. Under such circumstances, perhaps the heroic harmonies of the Arena Chapel could not be recaptured.

Both chapels were whitewashed in the eighteenth century and cleaned and overpainted in the nineteenth. A twentieth-century restoration removed most repainting, revealing a different situation in each chapel. The Bardi Chapel, frescoed with scenes from the life of St. Francis, reappeared in good condition, except for gaps left by earlier mutilations. But since the Peruzzi Chapel was painted largely *a secco* and later whitewashed, it is a ghost of its former self and none of its scenes is illustrated here. In all his fresco cycles, Giotto must have had assistance in laying out the surface and in the actual painting, especially when rendering the background figures and less important details. Conservation work in both chapels has shown that there were no *sinopie* on the walls, so preparatory drawings on paper or parchment were probably used to transfer Giotto's ideas to the pictorial surface.

At first sight, little appears to be going on in the Bardi frescoes, but a closer look discloses how Giotto modified his dramatic style in his later years. *St. Francis Undergoing the Test by Fire Before the Sultan of Egypt* (fig. 3.20) represents an episode from Francis's trip in 1219 to Egypt, where he tried to convert Sultan Melek-el-Kamel. Francis offered to walk through fire to prove his faith, challenging Muslim scholars to undergo a similar test. In his representation of this event, Giotto stepped back from the intensity that made the Arena Chapel frescoes so powerful. The sultan sits on his throne, while on the right St. Francis calmly prepares to enter the fire. The scholars' fear is conveyed through their positions and expressions. The two servants beside them (among the earliest known representations of black people in Western art) are naturalistically rendered in their rich coloring, set off by their luminous white and soft gray garments, and in their facial structure.
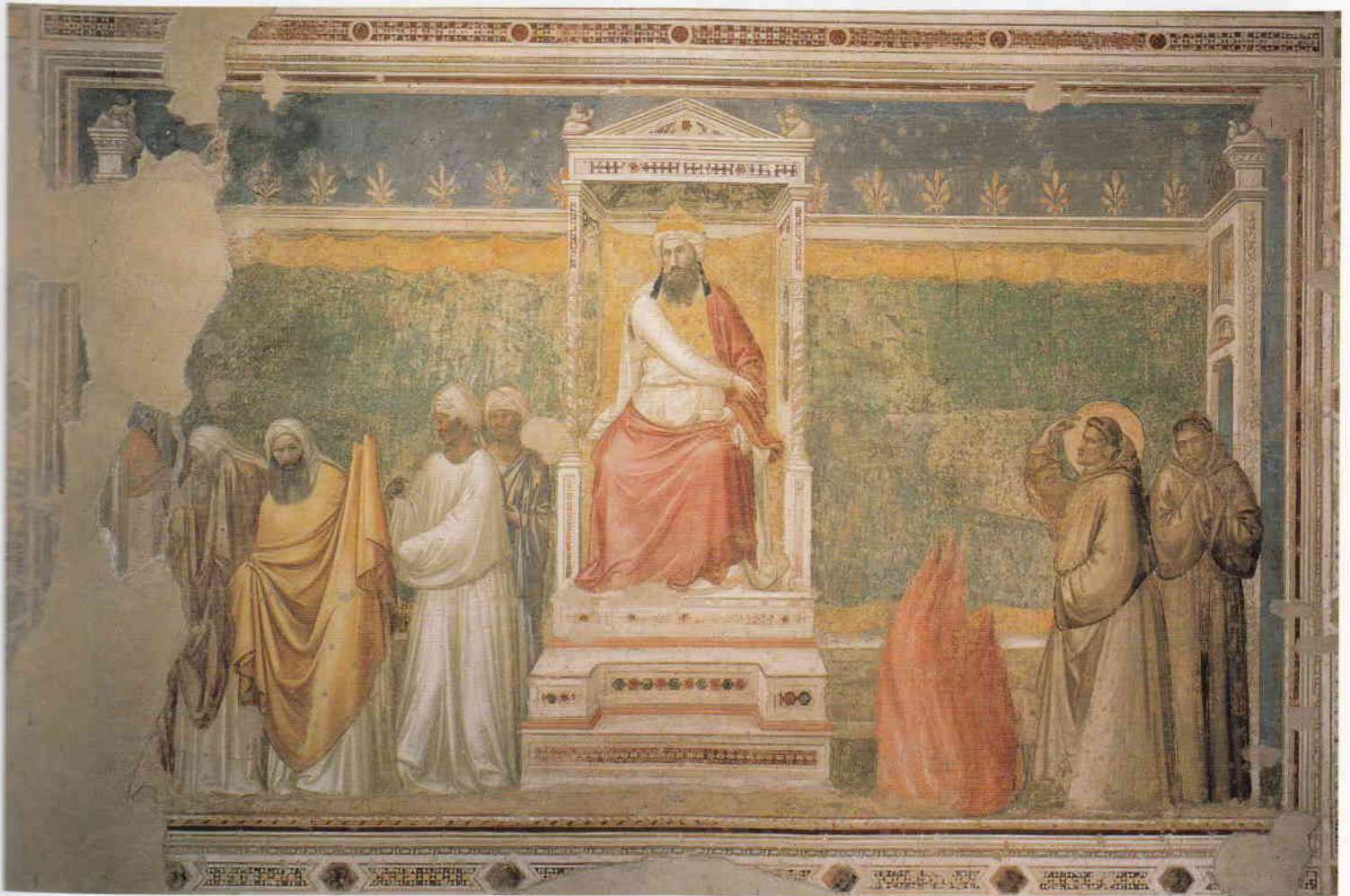


3.20. GIOTTO. *St. Francis Undergoing the Test by Fire Before the Sultan of Egypt.* Probably 1320s. Fresco, 9'2" × 14'9" (2.8 × 4.5 m). Bardi Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence. Commissioned by a member of the Bardi family.

3.21. GIOTTO. *Funeral of St. Francis.* Probably 1320s. Fresco, 9'2" × 14'9" (2.8 × 4.5 m). Bardi Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence.

To appreciate the *Funeral of St. Francis* (fig. 3.21) we must ignore the mutilation that resulted when the frescoes were whitewashed and a tomb, now removed, was added. The saint lies upon a bier. Friars crowd around him, weeping, kissing his hands and feet, or gazing into his face. Priests and monks at the saint's head intone the service for the dead. A richly dressed knight, his back to the spectator, kneels beside Francis and thrusts his hand into the wound in the saint's side in order to prove Francis's stigmata. Above, angels bear the released soul heavenward, his Franciscan habit now transformed into a celestial amethyst shade. The composition is carefully balanced, but a closer view reveals dramatic details (fig. 3.22). The face of the saint, and those of the mourners, express powerful emotion. The new calm and breadth of the Bardi fresco is evident in the response of the brother who looks upward in wonder at the soul being carried to heaven, whose expression seems to have been painted quickly in order to capture the figure's astonishment.

Above the entrance to the chapel is Giotto's *Stigmatization of St. Francis* (fig. 3.23), which is visible in the views of Santa Croce to the right of the chancel opening (see figs.



3.22. Detail of fig. 3.21.

2.36, 3.19). This subject had been represented many times since its earliest known depiction by Bonaventura Berlinghieri (see fig. 2.6, upper left-hand corner). According to the *Legenda Maior*, the official life of St. Francis written by St. Bonaventura, Francis was meditating on the lofty peak of La Verna when he asked a follower to bring him the Gospels and open them at random. Three times the book opened to the sufferings of Christ. At that moment, Francis knew he had been chosen to endure trials similar to those of Christ. Suddenly, a six-winged flaming seraph descended toward him, and in the midst of the wings appeared a crucified figure. Christ's Crucifixion pierced St. Francis's soul "with a sword of compassionate grief," and when the vision disappeared, the marks of the nails began to appear in his hands and feet, turning rapidly into the nails themselves—the heads on one side, the bent-down points on the other—and his right side was marked with a wound that often bled. A later version of the life of St. Francis, the anonymous *Fioretti* ("little flowers"),

speaks of a light that illuminated the surrounding mountains. Berlinghieri did not depict this light in any way, but other Duecento painters represented it as stripes of gold descending toward the saint. In Giotto's fresco, gold rays project from the wounds of Christ to the corresponding spots on Francis's body. The spiritual light radiating from the figure of Christ is the sole source of illumination. A tree to the right bends as if swayed by the storm of the apparition. On the left is the saint's cave, while the falcon who awakened Francis each morning is perched on a ledge below the summit of the peak.

In earlier representations, St. Francis kneels before the vision on one knee or both; here he turns away and then, raising his right knee, turns back toward the vision in what seems to be a combination of fear, surprise, pain, and, finally, acceptance. Only much later, in the works of Michelangelo, will we find a colossal figure of such complexity or one that so richly combines changing spiritual states and dynamic physical movement.



3.23. GIOTTO. *Stigmatization of St. Francis.* Probably 1320s. Fresco, 12'9" × 12'2" (3.9 × 3.7 m). Bardi Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence.
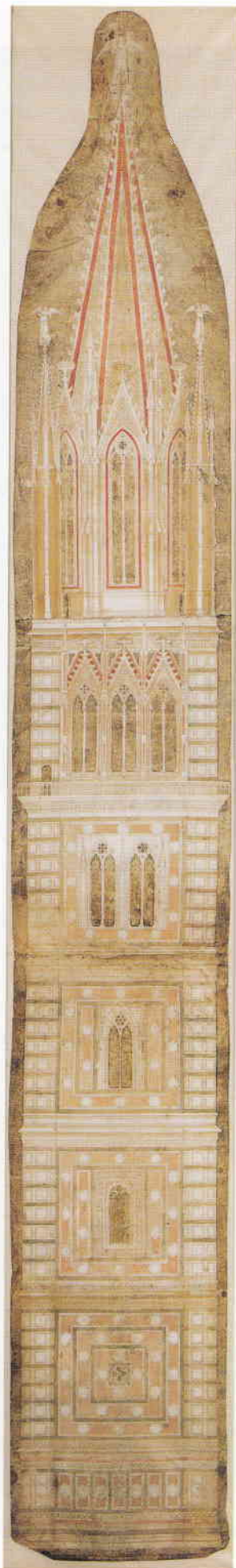
## THE DESIGN FOR THE CAMPANILE OF FLORENCE CATHEDRAL.

The principal surviving achievement of Giotto's last years is his design for the Campanile of the Cathedral of Florence (fig. 3.24). In January 1334, the commune appointed Giotto *capomaestro* of the cathedral in an extraordinary document that extols his fame as a painter but mentions no architectural training or experience. By this time, only the partially completed façade and south wall of the cathedral had been built. In April 1334, a document mentions the Campanile, the only portion of the cathedral with which the aging artist was involved. By January 1337, Giotto had died, but in the brief intervening period, work had proceeded on the bell tower at a rapid pace. A massive foundation was laid, and the first story constructed based on a large, tinted drawing on parchment. The drawing itself was probably carried out by assistants under Giotto's direction.

In the tradition of Tuscan *campanili*, the windows multiply as the stories rise. The final story in the drawing is an octagonal bell chamber flanked by pinnacles that are set on octagonal corner buttresses rising from the ground. Giotto's design has been related to that of an earlier tower at the Cathedral of Freiburg im Breisgau in Germany. In certain respects, the two structures are quite different: while Giotto's spire and pinnacles are solid, those at Freiburg, as in most other German cathedrals, are open tracery. Both the angles of Giotto's spire and the character of its crockets correspond to those of the solid spires begun, but never carried out, on the towers of Reims Cathedral in France. The tracery of Giotto's windows, with their beautiful pointed arches and crocketed gables, also resembles that at Reims.

The lower story of the Campanile as built (fig. 3.25) relates closely to Giotto's design, in which hexagons of white marble are placed within vertical pink marble panels. In the drawing these hexagons are repeated in the second story in a staccato pattern within bands enframing a quatrefoil window; two such bands appear on the third and fourth stories, one on the fifth, and none thereafter. Looking up, the effect would have been an oscillation of white hexagons against pink to the height of about 200 feet. There would have been seventy-five hexagons on each face of the Campanile, or three hundred for the entire structure, which tells us something about Giotto's desire for mathematical balance. Giotto's tower, furthermore, has

**3.24. GIOTTO** (design attributed to). Proposed design for the Campanile of the Cathedral, Florence. c. 1334. Tinted drawing on parchment, height of image 6'10" (2.08 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena. Commissioned by the Arte della Lana.
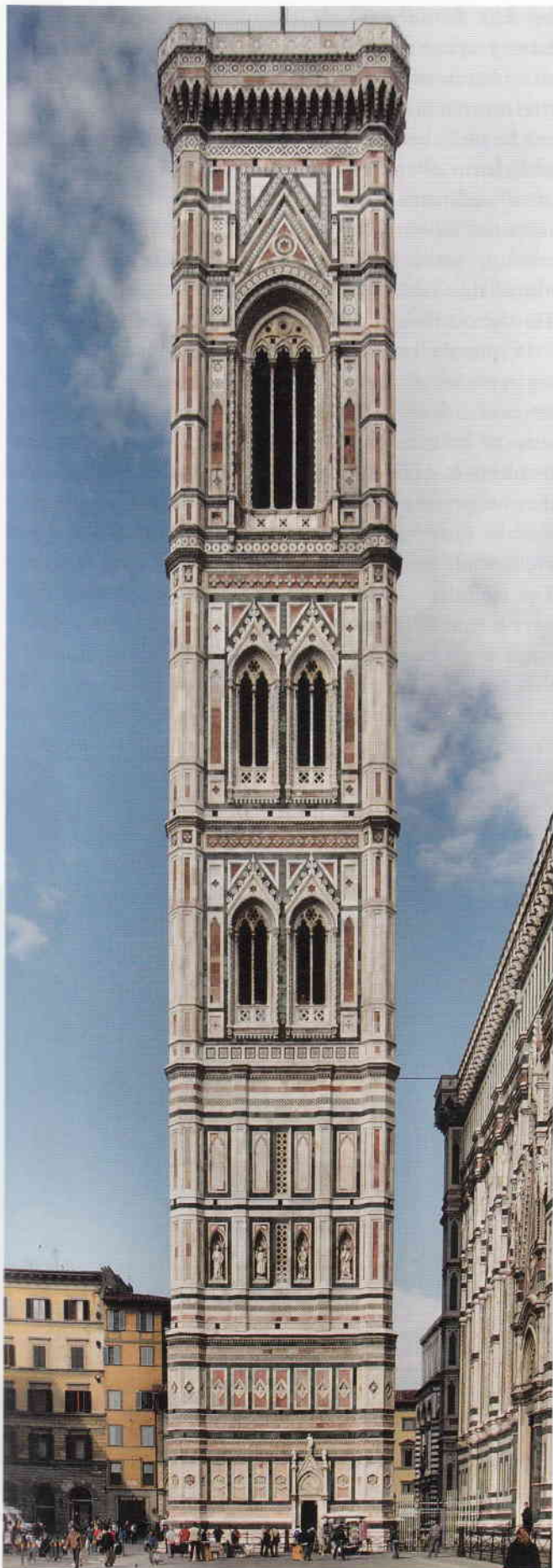
seven stories—the number of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and of the Joys and Sorrows of the Virgin. In addition, the hexagons are grouped in sevens, fours, eights (numbers connected with the Resurrection), and twelves (the number of the apostles and the gates of the New Jerusalem); and the perfect number one hundred is multiplied in their total by the number of the Trinity. Such number symbolism was widespread in the later Middle Ages.

Giotto, aware of the force of wind pressure on such a lofty bell chamber, added iron tie-rods from the pinnacles through the oculi of the corner windows, possibly to some stabilizing framework inside. Given his caution, it is surprising that he crowned his slender pinnacles with marble angels, their wings widespread, and poised a colossal Archangel Michael holding a banner on the tip of his spire, some 300 feet above the ground; all of these would have been exposed to wind, rain, ice, and snow. His successors chose not to follow his design (see p. 68). After his death it was discovered that the walls of the first story were insubstantial and their thickness had to be doubled. After all, Giotto was a painter, not an engineer or mason, and his design for the tower was a painter's tribute to the glory of his beloved Florence.

## UPPER CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI.

One of the most extensive Italian fresco cycles is the series of twenty-eight scenes from the life of St. Francis in the Upper Church of San Francesco at Assisi (see fig. 2.15). The cycle is also of special importance given the subject matter. What has vexed scholars has been the possible role of Giotto in designing and/or painting the cycle early in his career. This topic has been left until this point because there is still no general agreement.

Some scholars accept all but four of the scenes as early works of Giotto, but many others reject this attribution and date the scenes somewhat later. A few contemporaneous models existed for some scenes (see fig. 2.6), but no models survive for most of them and the solutions to the narrative problems raised by the new subjects often display striking originality, conceived in terms of a fresh, new naturalism.

No documents survive that would shed light on the series, and references to Giotto's work "at Assisi" may well refer to other paintings and not the Francis cycle. A chronicler named Riccobaldo wrote in approximately 1313 that

3.25. Campanile of the Cathedral, Florence. Lowest story by Giotto, 1334–37; next three stories by Andrea Pisano, c. 1337–43; remainder by Francesco Talenti, 1350s. Height 278' (84.7 m) Commissioned by the Arte della Lana. For examples of the sculptural decoration, see figs. 1.11, 3.32, 7.17.

the quality of Giotto's art can be seen in "the works he made in the churches of the Franciscans at Assisi, Rimini, and Padua, and in the church of the Arena." Since the Arena Chapel frescoes have been preserved, and since we know that paintings by Giotto once decorated the Franciscan churches in Rimini and Padua, it is argued that Riccobaldo, writing while Giotto was still alive, was correct about Assisi as well and that his remarks could only refer to the St. Francis cycle.

In each bay, painted spiral colonnettes resting on consoles and supporting an elaborate architrave above divide the wall into three or four scenes (fig. 3.26). By simulating architectural space, the artist responsible for the general layout established the illusion of a continuous portico as deep as the real catwalk above. Through this portico we read the vivid scenes of the life of St. Francis, largely based on the account in the *Legenda Maior* of St. Bonaventura.

Each bay is organized as a triptych, as in Scenes IV–VI shown here, in which two incidents involving collapsing churches flank a central event taking place in an open piazza. As in these scenes, the actual sequence of incidents in the *Legenda Maior* was sometimes altered in the Assisi cycle to demonstrate an underlying narrative and spiritual structure. In *St. Francis Praying Before the Crucifix at San Damiano*, the jagged masses of fragmentary walls quickly attract attention. In the second scene, *St. Francis Renounc-*

*ing His Worldly Goods*, the piazza is split vertically, leaving on one side Francis's raging father and on the other an embarrassed bishop cloaking the naked saint; Francis stretches out his hands in prayer to the hand of God, which can be seen above. The complex setting suggests the detail and charm of an Italian cityscape, and is unlike Giotto's more rudimentary architectural forms. The *Dream of Innocent III* shows the pope reclining in a sumptuous interior, while Francis upholds a collapsing building identifiable as the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano. Throughout the cycle, the color is crisp, clear, and decorative.

Despite the originality of the conceptions and fascinating episodes of careful observation, the compositions are staccato and abrupt, in contrast to Giotto's characteristic sense of balance. Facial expressions are generally uncommunicative, while the figures themselves do not have the massive presence of those of Giotto. Neither the impact nor the force of Giotto's figures is present in the Assisi cycle, while profiles, so characteristic of Giotto, are rare. The landscape scenes, none of which is illustrated here, have a kind of complexity alien not only to Giotto's landscape as we know it, but also to the manner of composing that Cennino Cennini said was derived from Giotto. To many, the differences in style and quality between the Francis cycle and the known works of Giotto are too great to be embraced by the style of a single artist.



3.26. MASTER OF THE ST. FRANCIS CYCLE. *St. Francis Praying Before the Crucifix at San Damiano; St. Francis Renouncing His Worldly Goods; Dream of Innocent III.* Early fourteenth century. Fresco, each 8'10" × 7'7" (2.7 × 2.3 m). Upper Church of S. Francesco, Assisi. See also fig. 2.15.

The need to demonstrate that the Francis cycle at Assisi is not by Giotto has had a somewhat negative impact on its reputation, preventing us from recognizing its unique qualities. The cycle is revolutionary in ways that reveal an alternative direction to that taken by Giotto. Many of the scenes at Assisi offer a vivid, naturalistic effect that indicates an interest in capturing vignettes of everyday life. In several scenes the artist squeezes in the crowds that must have accompanied Francis, while in others we have glimpses of authentic, albeit miniaturized, architecture from the period, such as the convincing depiction of the ruined church in figure 3.26. In a scene not illustrated here that is set in Assisi, the artist represented the façade of an ancient Roman temple that is near the church where we view the fresco; such an inclusion was intended to convince the viewer that the miracle represented was vivid and real. The life and character of Francis of Assisi, who lived, died, and was canonized less than a century before the frescoes were painted, are rendered accessible and immediate in the daring new naturalism of this cycle.

While the style suggests that at least three different masters painted the scenes, the consistency of the compositions suggests that one artist must have made designs for all twenty-eight, which were then approved by the superior general of the Franciscan Order. The connections with ancient Roman architecture and painting are so strong that it seems likely the master who designed the cycle and the painters of the majority of the scenes were from Rome, of a generation following Jacopo Torriti and Pietro Cavallini.

## Florentine Painters after Giotto

The authority of Giotto's style in Florence was so great that it may well have impeded the emergence of other innovative artists. Nonetheless, three of Giotto's Florentine assistants became important painters in their own right. Closest to the master, perhaps, is Maso di Banco (active 1330s and 1340s). His fresco cycle at Santa Croce featured scenes from the lives of the Emperor Constantine and St. Sylvester, the pope whose legend held that he baptized the emperor. In one scene set in the Roman forum, St. Sylvester seals the mouth of a dragon whose breath has killed two pagan magicians (fig. 3.27). The magicians lie dead amid Roman ruins but then Sylvester resurrects them and they



3.27. MASO DI BANCO. *St. Sylvester Sealing the Dragon's Mouth and Resuscitating Two Pagan Magicians*. c. 1336–39. Fresco, width 17'6" (5.34 m). Bardi-Bardi di Vernio Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence.

are shown alive, kneeling in thankfulness. This before-and-after representation is typical of Trecento miracle paintings. The massive figures and treatment of space and lighting were learned from Giotto but, through overlapping, Maso has created a much greater sense of spatial depth and complexity than is found in the works of Giotto. The Roman ruins, with their piles of debris, empty arches, and plants growing in the cracks, evoke the desolation wrought by the dragon, an essential part of the narrative.

Bernardo Daddi (active c. 1312–48), another Giotto follower, is an artist whose sensitivity was more suited to panel paintings than to frescoes. A triptych intended for personal devotion (fig. 3.28) is typical of the intimacy of his best pictures, showing a different approach to the Virgin and Child from the majestic images in the tradition that runs from Coppo di Marcovaldo to Giotto. Daddi's Virgin smiles gently as she admonishes the playful Christ Child. The delicate Gothic forms of the throne provide ample space for her, yet seem to diminish her monumental size. The



3.28. BERNARDO DADDI. Triptych. 1333(?). Central panel, 35³⁄₈ × 38¹⁄₈" (89 × 97 cm). Loggia del Bigallo, Florence.

donors are smaller in scale, following convention. Saints and prophets frame the main scene. The intimacy extends to the side wings: in the *Nativity* to the left, for example, Mary has taken Christ out of the manger to cradle him on her lap, while the *Crucifixion* on the right is calm and restrained, creating an effect of introspection in the figures of Francis, kneeling at the foot of the cross, and St. John the Evangelist.

The intimacy of Daddi's narratives is probably the result of a happy conjunction of his own temperament, the more relaxed taste of the 1340s, and the example of Gothic ivory carvings brought from France, which often reveal a similar sweetness and playfulness. But Daddi is never sentimental: his forms are round and firm, his drawing is precise, his modeling clear, and his color resonant. His drapery folds flow easily while still emphasizing the three-dimensional bodies of his figures.

The principal achievement of Taddeo Gaddi (active c. 1328–c. 1366), another faithful follower of Giotto and father of Agnolo Gaddi, is the fresco cycle in the Baroncelli Chapel, one of the larger chapels in Santa Croce (fig. 3.29).
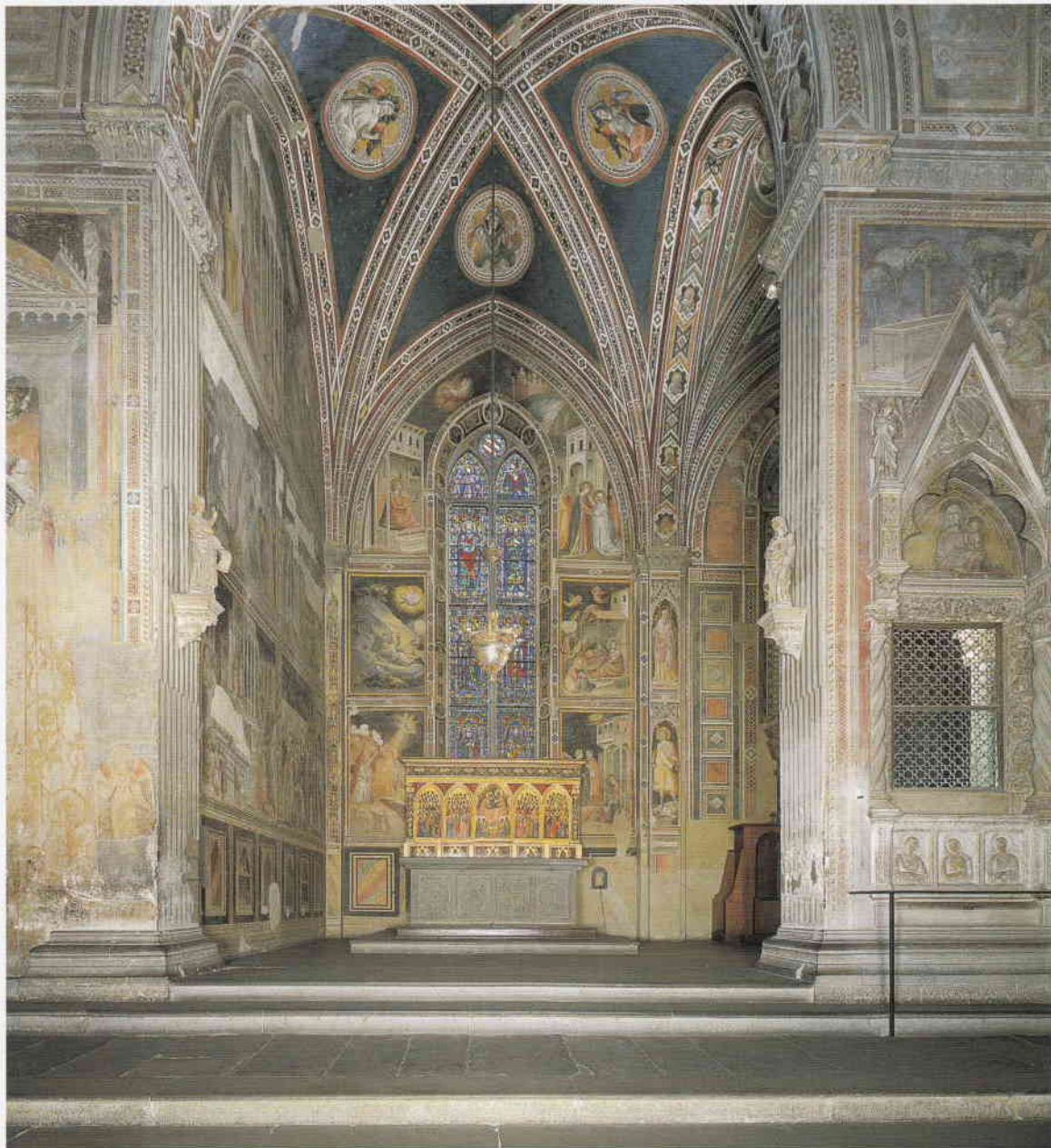


3.29. View of the Baroncelli Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence, with frescoes of scenes from the Life of the Virgin by Taddeo Gaddi of c. 1328–30 and an altarpiece of the *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints* signed by Giotto. Frescoes commissioned by Bivigliano, Bartolo, and Salvestro Manetti and by Vanni and Piero Bandini de' Baroncelli. The frescoes on the vault represent the *Four Cardinal Virtues*. The stained-glass window, designed by Taddeo Gaddi, features standing figures of saints with, at the top, the *Stigmatization of St. Francis*.

As much of the work was produced during Giotto's last years, it may reflect his ideas. Giotto signed the altarpiece, although critics agree that it is largely a workshop production. The *Annunciation to the Shepherds* (fig. 3.30) is notable for its dramatic rendering of the effect of nighttime light, an important forerunner of later efforts in this direction, including Correggio's Cinquecento *Adoration of the Shepherds* (see fig. 18.42), and all its Baroque descendants. The angel casts a strong light onto the dark hillside, where the shepherds are guarding their sheep.

Taddeo's *Last Supper with the Tree of Life* in the refectory of Santa Croce shows the vigor of this painter (fig. 3.31). The fresco illustrates a theme developed by St. Bonaventura. Christ hangs not upon the conventional cross but upon the symbolic Tree of Life, which grew alongside the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9). The medallions hanging from it, the fruits of this tree, represent the four Evangelists and twelve prophets. With the exception of the *Stigmatization of St. Francis*, the scenes to the sides are set at meals, an appropriate choice for the refectory where the monks ate while



3.30. TADDEO GADDI.
*Annunciation to the Shepherds.*
c. 1328–30. Fresco. Baroncelli
Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence.
See also fig. 3.29.

listening to readings and sermons. The *Last Supper* below is the earliest surviving example of the many that still decorate the refectories of Florentine monasteries and convents. The strong, simple figures with their harsh expressions contrast with the delicate refinement of those by Daddi. Christ and the apostles seem to be placed in front of the bands that divide the upper scenes, so they are thrust forward toward the viewer. Judas is located on "our" side of the table, a placement that persists in art until Leonardo's *Last Supper* more than a century later.



3.31. TADDEO GADDI. Frescoes of the *Last Supper with the Tree of Life and Other Scenes*. c. 1360. Width 39' (12 m). Refectory, Sta. Croce, Florence. Commissioned by the woman in the garments of a Franciscan tertiary kneeling at the foot of the cross, behind St. Francis. At the right are the *Priest at his Easter Meal Receiving Word of St. Benedict's Hunger in the Wilderness* and *Mary Magdalen Washing the Feet of Christ*, at the left are the *Stigmatization of St. Francis* and *St. Louis of Toulouse Feeding the Poor and Sick of Toulouse*.

*Above:* 3.32. ANDREA PISANO (from a design by Giotto?). *Creation of Adam.* c. 1334–37. Marble, 32³/₄ × 27¹/₄" (83 × 69 cm). Removed from original location on the Campanile, Florence (see fig. 3.25), and now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence. Commissioned by the Arte della Lana.

## Sculpture

Giotto's style dominated the art of the Trecento, including sculpture. The work of Andrea Pisano has a special relationship to Giotto and his works. Andrea (c. 1290–1348) was of no relation to Nicola and Giovanni Pisano; he acquired his name because he came from a town then in Pisan territory. We have already noted his architectural work on the Florentine Campanile and the reliefs he sculpted, probably based on designs by Giotto to decorate the structure (see fig. 1.11). Lorenzo Ghiberti claimed to have seen Giotto's designs for these reliefs, which he says were "most exceptionally drawn." The *Creation of Adam* (fig. 3.32), which begins the series,



3.33. ANDREA PISANO. South Doors. 1330–36. Bronze with gilding, 16' × 9'2" (4.86 × 2.8 m). Baptistery, Florence. Commissioned by the Arte di Calimala. The outer frame was commissioned from Lorenzo and Vittorio Ghiberti in 1452 but not completed until 1463, eight years after Lorenzo's death.

obviously derives directly from Giotto's quatrefoil representing the same subject in the decorative framework of the Arena Chapel (see figs. 3.5, 3.11). The figures and their poses are almost identical, although the increased size of Andrea's image permitted the figure of God the Creator to be shown in its entirety and allowed the addition of a splendid array of trees, including both the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life.

Andrea had been brought to Florence as a specialist in bronze casting to help make a set of bronze doors for one of the portals of the Florentine Baptistery (see fig. 2.33). These doors feature twenty scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist with figures of eight virtues below (fig. 3.33). Like the two sets of doors by Ghiberti that followed in the Quattrocento, they consist of bronze panels set in a bronze frame. The figures and many of the raised elements of ornament, architecture, and landscape were originally covered with gold leaf. The individual compositions of the scenes from the Baptist's life, with one exception, are derived from either the Baptistery mosaics (see fig. 2.9) or Giotto's fresco cycle in the Peruzzi Chapel at Santa Croce; perhaps as an outsider Andrea's contract required him to employ these Florentine models in representing the life of the city's patron saint. Or, since Giotto was then the *capomaestro* of the cathedral complex, it is possible that he might have provided drawings from these sources for Andrea to follow. The limited depth, well-spaced compositions, and simple stagelike sets are directly related to Giotto's vision of form and space, and especially to his economy of statement. The scene of *The Baptism of the Multitude* (fig. 3.34) is neatly balanced inside the fashionable Gothic quatrefoil.

We have seen how Giotto's new style and narrative interpretation dominated Florentine art in the first half of the Trecento. Before turning to its crucial role in the second half of the century, we need to turn our attention to the artistic changes that took place in another Tuscan city: Siena. Here, too, Giotto's influence was to be important.

# 4

# SIENESE ART OF

# THE EARLY TRECENTO

A s in Florence, painters in Siena moved decisively away from the Byzantine style. During the late Duecento and early Trecento in Siena, it was Duccio di Buoninsegna (active 1278–1318) who was at the forefront of the new developments.

## Duccio

Documents surviving from Duccio's life show that fines were levied against the painter for breaking a curfew, declining to swear allegiance to an important official, and refusing to fulfill military service. He did not pay some of the fines for years, and when he died his children renounced his will, possibly because it consisted mostly of debts. In Siena, Duccio may well have witnessed the carving of the cathedral pulpit by Nicola Pisano and his assistants, including his son Giovanni (see fig. 2.24). In Florence, Cimabue's *Enthroned Madonna and Child* in Santa Trinita (see fig. 2.10) must have excited the young painter. The earliest major work we know by Duccio is, surprisingly, a Florentine commission, a huge *Madonna and Child* (fig. 4.1) that has been identified with a Madonna commissioned in 1285 by a group founded to combat heresy, the "Society of the Virgin Mary." Known

popularly as the Laudesi from the lauds or hymns of praise they sang to the Virgin Mother, this group had its own chapel at Santa Maria Novella.

In the Uffizi today, Cimabue's and Duccio's *Madonnas* are displayed in the same room, enabling us to contrast the differences between them. Duccio's Virgin is seated sideways on an elegant wooden throne seen slightly from the right. The surrounding angels kneel naturally on one knee, and their placement against the gold ground suggests that they physically support the throne. Except for the cloth around the legs of the Christ Child, Duccio has abandoned the Byzantine gold drapery striations used by Cimabue; Duccio's drapery suggests the manner in which cloth wraps around and over three-dimensional bodies. The border of the Virgin's cloak, embellished with a delicate golden fringe, cascades in a series of flowing curves that adds a decorative touch. The colors of the angels' robes offer a refinement new to Italian panel painting, with flowerlike tones of lavender, yellow, rose, and luminous gray-blues and gray-lavenders.

Refinement of surface is emphasized. The arches on the Virgin's throne are hung with a splendid patterned silk, its folds indicated by strokes of thin wash brushed over the painted design. The same pattern reappears in the fragmentary frescoes in the chapel of the Laudesi at Santa

*Opposite:* 4.1. DUCCIO. *Madonna and Child (Rucellai Madonna).* Commissioned 1285. Panel, 14'9⅛" × 9'6⅛" (4.5 × 2.9 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by the Society of the Virgin Mary (the "Laudesi") but now known as the *Rucellai Madonna* because it once stood in the Rucellai family chapel in the Dominican church of Sta. Maria Novella (see fig. 2.35).
The contract for this work clarifies the role patrons could take in directing an artist's production, for it states that Duccio should "paint the said panel and adorn it with the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her omnipotent Son and other figures, in accordance with the wishes and pleasure of the said commissioners, and to gild it, and to do each and every thing which will contribute to the beauty of said panel .... " Duccio's fee for painting the panel, 150 "lire of small florins," was stipulated in the contract.

Maria Novella, suggesting that Duccio's *Madonna* may have been part of a wider decorative program. The frescoes have been attributed to both Duccio and Cimabue. The gold of the haloes is tooled in a pattern of interlocking circles and foliate designs derived, like the patterns of the silk, from French Gothic sources, while tiny Gothic arches decorate the spindles of the throne. The frame is painted with a series of images of saints alternating with ornamented bands.

The ovoid shapes of the Virgin's face are similar to those of Coppo di Marcovaldo's Virgin (see fig. 2.8), but Duccio's are more organic, in keeping with the Sienese artist's interest in undulating line and more naturalistic form. Her eyes are outlined in curves that unite the brow with her long, slender nose. Her upper lip protrudes slightly and the chin recedes to suggest her modesty. The angels, whose faces are similarly constructed, gaze in reverence toward the Christ Child, who extends a blessing with his outstretched hand.

Despite the subtle color and elegance of line, Duccio's picture offers a revolutionary exploration of space with its side view of the throne and the clear articulation of its support by surrounding angels. This redefinition of the Italo-Byzantine style in terms of both space and decoration surely had an effect on contemporary Florentine painters, including the young Giotto.

The small personal devotional image of the *Madonna and Child* by Duccio discussed in Chapter 1 as an example of tempera technique (see fig. 1.14) was painted at least a decade later, but the Byzantine influence is still paramount in the facial types. Duccio's signature flowing line is repeated in the drapery patterns. What is new and remarkable here is the use of a parapet in perspective across the foreground, which serves to remove the holy figures from the real space of the worshipper—a device that did not become common until the second half of the fifteenth century. The figures are also humanized in a manner not often found in Byzantine examples, with Christ reaching up to touch the Virgin's veil in a natural manner that has no precedent. The Madonna's pensive gaze establishes an interaction between the figures.

For Sienese citizens, the Virgin Mary was the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, and the patron saint of the republic; they were convinced, in fact, that the Virgin, accompanied by saints, protected their city. Siena was also known as Vetusta Civitas Virginis, the Ancient City of the Virgin. In 1308, Duccio was commissioned to create a high altarpiece for the cathedral, a striped marble structure at the apex of the city's highest hill (see figs. 2.26–2.27). Three years later the colossal altarpiece was finished, and a contemporary description relates how it was carried in triumphal procession to the cathedral:

At noontime on the ninth of June, with great devotions and processions, with the bishop of Siena ... all of the clergy of the Cathedral, and with all the monks and nuns of Siena, and the Nove [the Council of Nine], with the city officials, the Podestà and the Captain, and all the citizens with coats of arms ... with much devotion ... ringing all the bells for joy ... and throughout Siena they gave many alms to the poor people, with many speeches and prayers to God and to his mother, Madonna ever Virgin Mary, who helps, preserves, and increases in peace the good state of the city of Siena and its territory, as advocate and protectress of that city, and who defends the city from all danger and all evil. And so this panel was placed in the Cathedral on the high altar.

The altarpiece was not only a religious triumph for the city, but also an artistic one for the painter. In 1506, however, it was replaced by a fashionable new ciborium, statues, and candlesticks, and when Vasari wrote his *Lives* in 1550 he was not even able to discover its location.

Originally Duccio's *Virgin in Majesty*—or simply the *Maestà* in Italian—was an enormous, Gothic-pinnacled, double-sided work (see figs. 4.5–4.8); since the high altar stood under the dome of the cathedral, the back of the altarpiece was also visible. The central panel on the front is dominated by the enthroned Virgin (fig. 4.2) adored by saints and angels; immediately above is a row of bust-length prophets.

The head of St. Catherine of Alexandria (fig. 4.3), at the extreme left, demonstrates how Duccio replaced the Byzantine demarcation of forms with a new, unified sense of surface. Catherine's somber gaze is characteristic of Duccio's figures, as is the Byzantine treatment of the eye so that the white is continuous below the iris. His treatment of the fabrics is refined: Catherine's gold-embroidered scarf seems translucent, and we sense the shape of her head and see her hair through its flowing folds. Her mantle is painted over gold, and the paint has been tooled away in a pattern that suggests the sparkle of gold-thread damask. The Christ Child, who gazes directly outward at the observer, is a more natural, human baby than in earlier Sienese altarpieces. In line with the artist's decreasing reliance on Byzantine motifs, gold striations appear only here and there in the richly modeled drapery that courses over the slender bodies.

The *Nativity* from the front predella (fig. 4.4) preserves its original framing. Duccio kept the Byzantine cave, but also inserted the French Gothic shed, a compromise symptomatic of his artistic position, which draws upon both traditions. Mary, enveloped in her bright blue mantle, reclines on a scarlet mattress. Following Byzantine tradition, she pays no attention to the Christ Child in the manger behind her. In the foreground, the Christ Child is

*Above:* 4.2. DUCCIO. Detail of the *Madonna and Child*, from the central front panel of the *Maestà*. 1308–11. Central front panel (whole), 7 × 13' (2.13 × 3.96 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo for the high altar of Siena Cathedral.

The inscription includes Duccio's only known signature: "Holy Mother of God, be thou the cause of peace for Siena and, because he painted thee thus, of life for Duccio." The altarpiece is recorded as costing 3,000 florins.

The Sienese Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, like its Florentine counterpart and others elsewhere, exhibits works of art that were once on or in the city's cathedral. It is located inside the vaults of what was once intended to be the side aisle of a much expanded cathedral, a plan that had to be aborted when the structure proved to be unstable.

4.3. DUCCIO. Head of St. Catherine, detail of fig. 4.5.

4.4. DUCCIO. *Nativity* and *Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel*, from the front predella of the *Maestà* (see figs. 4.5–4.6). Tempera on panels: *Nativity*, 17¼ × 17½" (44 × 45 cm); *Prophets*, each 17¼ × 6½" (44 × 16.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Mellon Collection).

4.5. DUCCIO. *Maestà*. Conjectural reconstruction of the front, with predella, pinnacles, and framing elements. Digitized reconstruction by Lew Minter.

It is possible that the predella needed to support such a huge altarpiece was so deep that each end held a narrative scene, in which case the predella reconstruction shown here and in figures 4.6–4.8 would take a different form. The numbering sequence used for figures 4.5–4.8 is based on the narrative sequence, starting with the infancy of Christ on the front predella and finishing with the post-resurrection scenes on the back pinnacles, followed by the scenes of the later life of the Virgin on the front pinnacles.

*Below:* 4.6. DUCCIO. *Maestà*. Conjectural reconstruction of the iconography of the narrative scenes on the front.

CENTRAL PANEL, *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels* (see figs. 4.2–4.3).

FRONT PREDELLA (conjectural), narrative scenes from the Infancy of Christ, flanked by prophets: 1. *Annunciation*; 2. *Nativity and Annunciation to the Shepherds* (see fig. 4.4); 3. *Adoration of the Magi*; 4. *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*; 5. *Massacre of the Innocents*; 6. *Flight into Egypt*; 7. *Christ Disputing with the Doctors in the Temple*.

FRONT NARRATIVE PINNACLES, Later Life of the Virgin Mary: 49. *Annunciation of the Death of the Virgin*; 50. *Arrival of John the Evangelist*; 51. *Farewell of the Apostles*; 52. *Death of the Virgin*; 53. *Funeral of the Virgin*; 54. *Entombment of the Virgin*; 55. *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin* (conjectural, lost; reconstruction based on later Sienese version).

Angel pinnacles (largely lost, but several examples survive).

plunged by midwives into a chalicelike tub, as in Nicola Pisano's Pisa Baptistery pulpit (see fig. 2.20). Some of the angels behind the cave look up toward heaven, while others bend down; one waves a scroll announcing the event to shepherds at the right. The brilliant colors of Mary's cloak and mattress contrast with softer colors, such as the rose of Joseph's cloak.

In the main front panel of the *Maestà* as we know it today, Sienese saints kneel in the front row; more saints and four archangels stand behind them, and four angels rest their hands and chins on Mary's inlaid marble throne (figs. 4.5–4.6). In the resulting interlace of figures, heads, and haloes—all united by the flow of drapery lines, ornamental patterns, and brilliant color—separate elements do not stand out as they would in a composition by Giotto.

*Left:* 4.7. DUCCIO. *Maestà.* Conjectural reconstruction of the back, with predella, pinnacles, and framing elements. Digitized reconstruction by Lew Minter.

*Right:* 4.8. DUCCIO. *Maestà.* Conjectural reconstruction of the iconography of the narrative scenes on the back.

BACK PREDELLA (conjectural), narrative scenes from the Life of Christ: 8. *Baptism of Christ* (conjectural, lost); 9. *First Temptation of Christ* (conjectural, lost); 10. *Temptation of Christ in the Temple;* 11. *Temptation of Christ on the Mountain* (see fig. 4.9); 12. *Calling of Peter and Andrew;* 13. *Marriage Feast at Cana;* 14. *Christ and the Woman of Samaria at the Well;* 15. *Christ Heals the Blind Man;* 16. *Transfiguration;* 17. *Raising of Lazarus.*

CENTER BACK, LOWER REGISTER, narrative scenes from the Life of Christ: 18. *Entry into Jerusalem* (see fig. 4.10); 19. *Last Supper;* 20. *Washing of the Feet;* 21. *Sermon to the Apostles* and *Judas Receiving the Blood Money from the High Priests of the Temple,* occurring simultaneously; 22. *Agony in the Garden;* 23. *Kiss of Judas;* 24. *Christ Before Annas* and *First Denial of Peter,* occurring simultaneously; 25. *Christ Before Caiaphas* and *Second Denial of Peter,* occurring simultaneously; 26. *Mocking of Christ* and *Third Denial of Peter,* occurring simultaneously; 27. *Christ Before Pilate;* 28. *Pilate Declaring Christ's Innocence to the Pharisees.*

CENTER BACK, UPPER REGISTER, narrative scenes from the Passion of Christ: 29. *Christ before Herod;* 30. *Christ in the Robe Before Pilate;* 31. *Flagellation;* 32. *Mocking of Christ;* 33. *Pilate Washing his Hands;* 34. *Christ Carrying the Cross;* 35. *Crucifixion* (see fig. 4.11); 36. *Descent from the Cross;* 37. *Entombment of Christ;* 38.
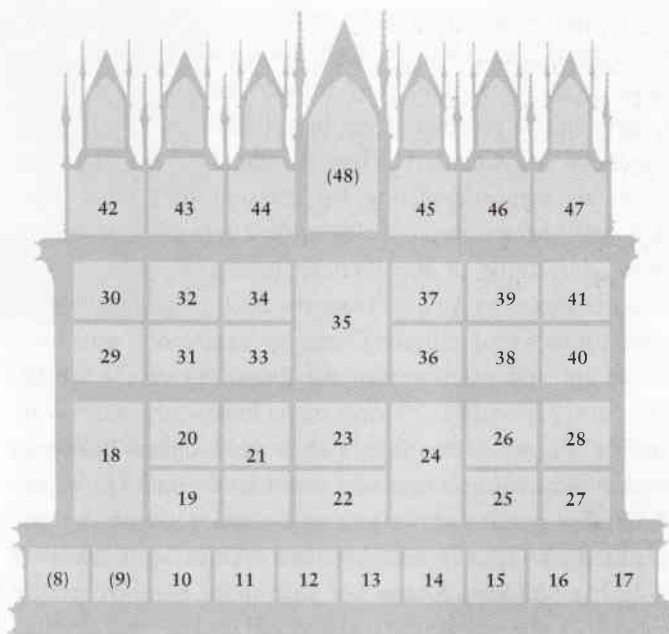


*Descent into Limbo;* 39. *Three Marys at the Tomb;* 40. *Noli Me Tangere;* 41. *Journey to Emmaus.*

BACK PINNACLES, post-resurrection narrative scenes: 42. *Christ Appears behind Closed Doors;* 43. *Incredulity of Thomas;* 44. *Apparition to the Apostles at the Sea of Tiberias;* 45. *Apparition to the Apostles on a Mountain in Galilee;* 46. *Apparition at Supper;* 47. *Pentecost;* 48. *Ascension of Christ* (conjectural, lost).

4.9. DUCCIO. *Temptation of Christ on the Mountain*, from the back predella of the *Maestà* (see figs. 4.7–4.8). Panel, 17 × 18⅛" (43 × 46 cm). Copyright The Frick Collection, New York.

Rather, the panel takes on the appearance of a rich and splendid fabric. The later life of the Virgin was found on the pinnacles, surmounted by bust-length angels (although the central pinnacles, on both the front and back, have never been found, and their subjects are unknown). The panels on the predella at the base illustrated scenes from the infancy of Christ. The back of the altarpiece offered a series of scenes depicting the Passion of Christ (figs. 4.7–4.8). Most parts of Duccio's altarpiece remain in Siena, but some of the predella panels are scattered in other collections. A panel from the back predella (fig. 4.9) shows how Satan tempted Christ by leading him up a high mountain and offering him the kingdoms of the world. Duccio represented the kingdoms as Italian city-states with walls and gates surrounding public and religious buildings with towers, domes, roof tiles, and battlements. The colorful architecture of those in the foreground is picked out delicately in light, while the distant cities are darker, as if lost in shadow. A sense of vast space is unexpectedly created by the cities' tiny scale. While we may feel that we can enter the environments Giotto created for his narratives (see fig. 3.6), we cannot penetrate the more complex world of Duccio's creation. Duccio's rocks appear to surge and twist, breaking upward toward the figures. On this moving ground the figures cannot stand with the firmness and decision of Giotto's people; they maintain an uncertain footing, as if walking on waves. In the drapery of Christ in this scene, Duccio's flowing line is transformed into straight lines and sharp points that reinforce Christ's

gesture and words: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Luke 4:8). Duccio's slender and somewhat sad Christ is utterly different from the majestic, forthright Christ of Giotto.

On the back of the *Maestà*, Christ's Passion is told in twenty-four scenes, beginning with the *Entry into Jerusalem* (fig. 4.10). The hilltop setting is similar to that of Siena itself, and the scene seems to derive from a documented Sienese Palm Sunday procession in which the bishop led a crowd to one of the city gates to meet an actor garbed as Christ. Duccio placed us in a field separated from the road by a wall with an open gate, over which we watch the procession winding up toward the city gate. People climb trees in an orchard on the other side of the
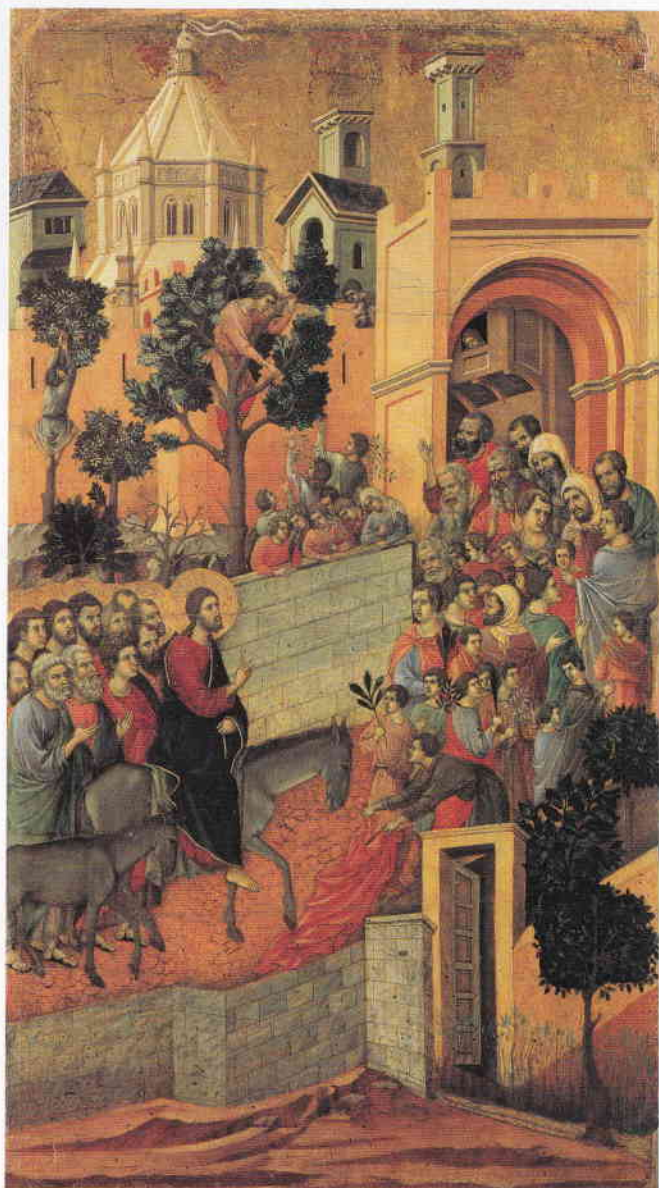


4.10. DUCCIO. *Entry into Jerusalem*, from the back of the *Maestà* (see figs. 4.7–4.8). Panel, 40⅛ × 21⅛" (102 × 56.5 cm). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.

road, as in Byzantine representations of the scene. Some onlookers spread their mantles before Christ, following the Gospel account. Christ rides a donkey, fulfilling the prophecy of Zachariah: "Behold, thy King cometh ... lowly, and riding upon an ass" (9:9). The crowd surges out of the gate, chattering and gesticulating, while the apostles follow Christ. In these two human rivers about to meet we experience a crowded medieval city. We look through the gate into the main street, where we can see a balcony with a head protruding through a window.

In the *Crucifixion* (fig. 4.11), on the other hand, Duccio revealed his ability to create a scene of mass violence and tragedy. All three crosses are shown and, following the Gospels, the legs of the thieves have been broken to ease their agony, while Christ's legs were left intact, fulfilling a prophecy that "a bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36). The slender crosses soar against the gold background, which shimmers with an effect that is airy and atmospheric. Duccio distinguished the penitent thief, turned toward Christ, from the unremorseful one, shown facing away. Below, the crowds are separated into two groups. As in the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, a text written by a Franciscan mystic living in Tuscany about 1300, Mary swoons below the cross, sinking into the arms of the holy women as she looks up toward Christ, from whose side blood and water gush in streams. Duccio's mastery of crowds and his ability to project human feeling are shown in this scene, with its flashing eyes and gesticulating hands. Despite all his subtle refinement, Duccio was no less dramatic a narrative artist than Giotto.

## Simone Martini

Like Giotto, Duccio had a number of pupils. Their works suggest that he was a liberating teacher, for each pupil developed a style independent of the master and of one another. One of the most original was Simone Martini (active 1315–1344), who most likely worked on Duccio's later commissions, including the *Maestà*. Shortly after Duccio's *Maestà* was completed, Simone was commis-sioned to paint a *Maestà* of his own, a large fresco on the end wall of the Council Chamber in Siena's Palazzo Pub-blico (figs. 4.12–4.13). From this vantage point, the Virgin could watch over the deliberations of the Council of the Sienese Republic or, to put it another way, the councillors would have the Virgin Mary and saints constantly before them to guide their behavior.

Simone unified the throng of saints and angels under a spacious cloth canopy held by saints, similar to the ones

4.12. View of the Council Chamber in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (see fig. 1.9).
This panoramic view of the largest governmental chamber in Siena's city hall demonstrates how such a room was progressively decorated over time; Simone's *Maestà* (fig. 4.13) is only the earliest decoration visible here. The monochromatic frescoes above the arched openings to the left were painted in 1363 and 1480 to celebrate Sienese military victories. Frescoed figures of Sienese saints and local holy figures were painted between the arches in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while on the soffits of the arches we see details of the fifteenth-century decoration of the adjacent chapel. On the wall opposite Simone's *Maestà* was a circular world map (*mappamondo*) painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti; almost 16 feet across, it had Siena at its center and could be rotated on a central pivot to bring areas closer to the viewer.

that shelter the Eucharist today when it is carried in procession through the streets of Italian towns. Some portions of the fresco were painted *a secco* and have peeled off, showing the underdrawing. A document of 1321 reveals that Simone "repaired" certain sections of the fresco, although a better word might be "updated," as is suggested by the different head styles evident in the work. In the rear ranks of the Virgin's attendants some Duccio-inspired heads are still to be seen, their eyes almond-shaped and their hair covered with mantles. The heads of the Virgin and Child and of the two female saints that flank them are painted on new patches of plaster and show the more Gothic type characteristic of Simone's later works; they have broad, full cheeks, pursed mouths, and wavy or curly blond hair.

Between the two campaigns of work on the *Maestà*, Simone had been invited to Naples by the French king, Robert of Anjou. While there he painted a large dynastic icon depicting the king kneeling, about to receive the crown from his older brother, Louis (fig. 4.14), who was canonized in 1317 as St. Louis of Toulouse. Motifs from the family's coat of arms decorate the frame, the background, and the garments. The frontal figure of the saint had to be shifted to the left to make room for the kneeling king. In this highly original composition Simone displayed his ingenuity in handling boldly silhouetted areas and in creating surface patterns that are even richer and more delicate than those of Duccio. The large round brooch (known as a morse) that holds together the saint's cape is made of glass decorated with the family arms, executed in
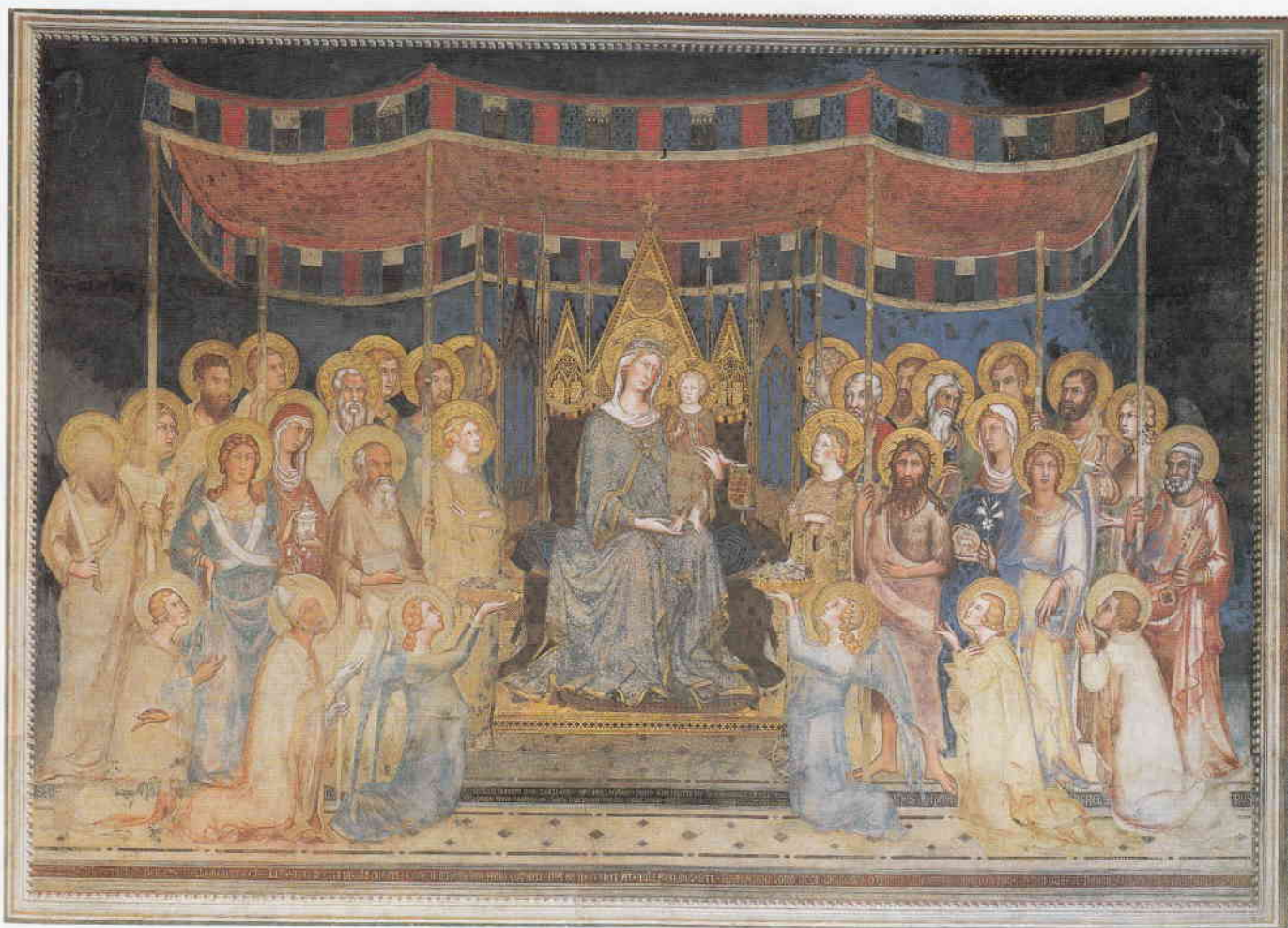


4.13. SIMONE MARTINI. *Maestà*. Between 1311 and 1317; repaired 1321. Fresco, 25' × 31'9" (7.6 × 9.7 m). Council Chamber, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. Commissioned by the Commune of Siena.
The inscriptions on the steps of the throne urge the use of wisdom and justice, and in one case the Virgin speaks directly to the Sienese public and the city's rulers: "The angels' flowers ... that adorn the heavenly meadow, delight me no more than good counsel...."
From the beam in front of the *Maestà* hang two sculpted, polychromed arms, with openings in the hands, suggestive of angels descending from heaven. These must have held ropes to support lamps that hung in front of the fresco. The lamps could thus be raised or lowered as needed.

4.14. SIMONE MARTINI. *St. Louis of Toulouse Crowning Robert of Anjou, King of Naples*, and *Scenes from the Life of St. Louis of Toulouse*. c. 1317. Panel with gold and silver leaf, originally embellished with gold work and precious stones, 6'6¾" × 4'6¼" (2 × 1.38 m). Museo di Capodimonte, Naples. Commissioned by Robert of Anjou.

paint and gold leaf. Attached to the surface of the panel, this decoration originally also included precious gems, now lost. The richly embossed surface patterns are never permitted to compete with the basic element in Simone's mature style—a taut, linear contour, almost as if the shapes were cut from sheet metal.

While the face of St. Louis resembles the standardized head type used by Simone in other works, King Robert's features are an early example of the portraiture that will become so important during the Early Renaissance. The

silhouette is perhaps the simplest way to capture an individual, as we have already seen in Giotto's portrait of Enrico Scrovegni (see fig. 3.14). In this case, the contrast between the face of the placid, enthroned saint and the vigorous, individualized physiognomy of his brother is start-ling. Simone clearly fulfilled the need of his royal patron to be recognized.

In his frescoes in the St. Martin Chapel in San Francesco in Assisi (fig. 4.15), Simone demonstrated his narrative ability, sophisticated use of color, and decorative talents.

4.15. SIMONE MARTINI. Fresco cycle. Between 1312 and 1319 (?). St. Martin Chapel, Lower Church of S. Francesco, Assisi. Commissioned by Cardinal Gentile Partino da Montefiore dell'Aso. Scenes shown here are: *The Mass of St. Martin*, *The Miracle of Fire*, *The Knighting of St. Martin*, *St. Martin in the Imperial Camp*, and, in the entrance arch, *Sts. Mary Magdalen and Catherine of Alexandria*. Not visible here is the portrait of the donor kneeling before St. Martin on the inner surface of the entrance arch.

4.16. SIMONE MARTINI. *Dream of St. Martin*. Fresco, 8'8" × 6'7" (2.65 × 2 m).
St. Martin Chapel, Lower Church of S. Francesco, Assisi.

In the *Dream of St. Martin* (fig. 4.16), an aloof and princely Christ appears to the saint, who is in a deep sleep under a rose and blue plaid silk coverlet heightened by gold threads. The simple architecture isolates the sleeping saint, while the details of bed hangings and chest add an element of authenticity. The expressiveness of the faces is typical of Simone's style. We sense in these frescoes the impact of the works of Giotto in the scale of the figures relative to the architecture and in the simple way in which the narrative is clarified; in Simone's panel paintings, on the other hand, adherence to many of the stylistic principles espoused by Duccio is maintained.

Simone's *Annunciation* (fig. 4.17) was painted for Siena Cathedral in 1333. He signed it jointly with his brother-in-law Lippo Memmi. This signature and the joint payments for the work attest to their collaboration, but it is not clear what role Lippo played in the execution of the artwork. This is the earliest known example in which the Annunciation was the subject of an entire altarpiece. The gold background is traversed by raised gesso (*pastiglia*) words in beautiful Gothic lettering that stretch from Gabriel's mouth to Mary's ear: *Ave gratia plena dominus tecum*, "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee" (Luke 1:28). The elaborate frame
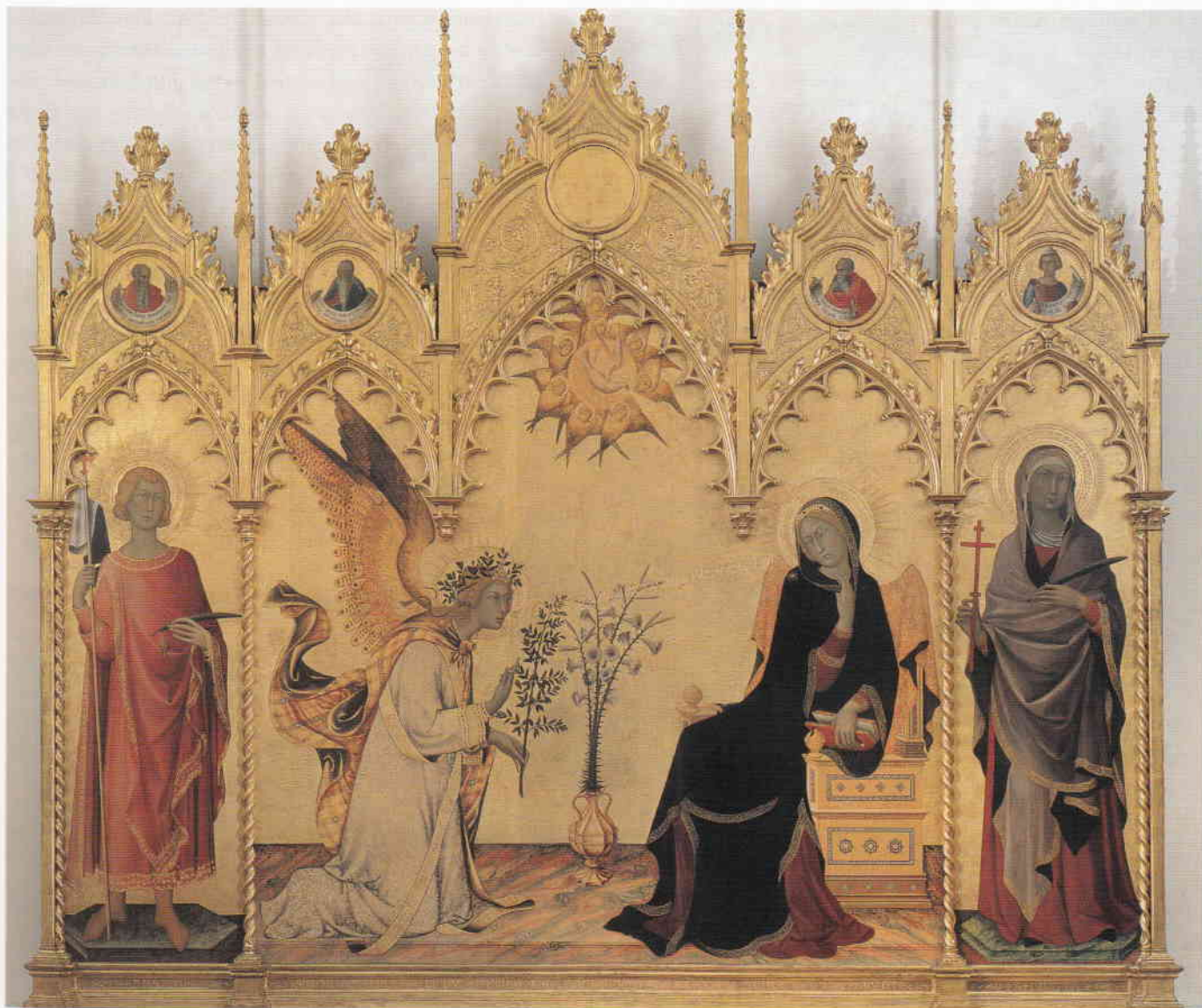
4.17. SIMONE MARTINI and LIPPO MEMMI. *Annunciation with Two Saints*. 1333. Panel, 10' × 8'9" (3 × 2.67 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo for the Cathedral of Siena.

An analysis of prices, undertaken by the scholar Hayden Maginnis, has revealed that the cost of this altarpiece was about equal to that of a fine house.

is not original, and the different floor design and angle of view between side panels and center suggest that the saints were not originally placed flanking the *Annunciation*.

As in Giotto's fresco (see figs. 3.8–3.9) the heavenly messenger kneels, but here the breathless suddenness of his arrival is indicated by the cloak that floats behind him. The Virgin shrinks back sharply at the news, following the Gospel account that she was disturbed by the angel's appearance and salutation. The violence of her movement increases the explosive immediacy of the scene. The sharp, taut curves of her body contrast with the more three-dimensional figure of the angel, who is crowned with olive leaves and holds an olive branch, symbol of peace. In the center of the richly veined marble floor is a vase of lilies, symbol of Mary's purity. The lilies, the olive leaves, the curves of the drapery, and even the features of Mary and Gabriel display the same sharp, metallic quality seen in Simone's *St. Louis of Toulouse*. Mary's suspicion, conveyed broadly in her pose, is accentuated by the sharp lines of her furrowed brow and pursed lips. Glittering sunburst shapes incised in the gold background burst out around the tooled haloes, adding to the bristling tension of the scene.

4.18. SIMONE MARTINI. *The Blessed Agostino Novello and Four of his Miracles.* c. 1324. Panel, 6'6" × 8'5" (2 × 2.7 m). Pinacoteca, Siena.

Simone revealed his skill as a narrator in the altarpiece representing the Blessed Agostino Novello with scenes of his miracles (fig. 4.18). That the altarpiece should follow the pattern of Bonaventura Berlinghieri's *St. Francis* (see fig. 2.6) and other Duecento images may have been requested by the unknown patron, but Simone transformed the stiff pose of his prototypes into a gently swaying one. Agostino is seen among the trees of a forest, seemingly lost in meditation, while an angel whispers in his ear. The stubble on the monk's face is a realistic detail rare at this time, while the book he holds may be symbolic of the legal learning for which Novello, briefly prior general of the Augustinian Order, was respected. The lateral scenes represent posthumous miraculous appearances, in which he heals a boy attacked by a wolf (top left) and restores to life a traveler thrown from his horse (top right) and a baby fallen from a broken hammock (lower right). In the lower left scene, Novello grabs a board dislodged from a balcony and then revives a child who has fallen. Wood-grained



4.19. SIMONE MARTINI. *Way to Calvary.* c. 1340–44. Panel, 9⅞ × 6¾" (25 × 17 cm). The Louvre, Paris. Originally part of a small folding devotional work commissioned by an Orsini cardinal.

balconies, nail-studded doors, and views into staircase halls recapture the Siena of Simone's day. Agostino Novella was beatified but never achieved sainthood; perhaps this altarpiece, with its four miracles, was part of an effort to convince the authorities that he deserved canonization.

Simone's last years were spent in Avignon, a Provençal city then the seat of the papacy. His followers left a number of works from this period, but only a few by Simone remain, including a series of panels from a folding devotional work representing the Passion. The most dramatic of these panels is the *Way to Calvary* (fig. 4.19). In this tiny work painted in France, where we might expect a renewed influence of the French Gothic style, Simone's elegance is replaced by an interest in immediate and even violent action. Christ, led forth from a very Sienese Jerusalem, is almost overwhelmed by the mob, which includes loving friends, grieving apostles, and mocking Romans and Hebrews, as well as two irreverent children. To support this new interest in passionate drama, Simone's delicate color has given way to a fierce brilliance centering on the scarlet robe of Christ. The small scale of the panel gives the scene a special immediacy. Perhaps the emphasis on drama here can be related to the devotional practices of the patron, a still-unidentified Orsini cardinal.

The dramatic intensity seen in Simone's later work had an impact on his followers, as is evident in the New Testament cycle painted on the right side-aisle wall of the church known as the Collegiata in San Gimignano, a hill town near Siena (fig. 4.20; the cycle is paired with an unusual cycle of scenes drawn from the Old Testament on



4.20. View of the side aisle wall of the Collegiate Church, San Gimignano, with New Testament frescoes by the workshop or followers of SIMONE MARTINI. 1330s or 1340s. *The Pact of Judas* (see fig. 4.21) is visible far right; *The Betrayal* (see fig. 4.22) is partially visible to the left of the first column. The frescoes of the New Testament cycle here were attributed by Vasari to Barna da Siena, but current opinion finds the hands of three or four distinct painters working on the cycle as collaborators.

4.21. Workshop or followers of SIMONE MARTINI. *The Pact of Judas.* 1330s or 1340s. Fresco, 8'6" × 7'9" (2.6 × 2.4 m). Collegiate Church, San Gimignano.

the Collegiata's left side-aisle wall). Among the scenes is a frightening representation of *The Pact of Judas* (fig. 4.21), showing the moment when the high priests give Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray Christ. While the composition recalls earlier renderings of this subject, including that on Duccio's *Maestà*, here the incident is converted into a transaction between sinister characters drawn together so that their heads form a human arch. The perspective of the architecture seems to pull us into the scene, suggesting our guilty complicity in the betrayal.

In all the Passion scenes Christ is alone, but never more so than in *The Betrayal* (fig. 4.22). Peter's attack on Malchus, when he cuts off the servant's ear, fills one-third of the scene. The artist represented the cowardice of the other apostles, who leave Christ to his fate. Even St. John gathers his cloak about him and darts a look of terror over his shoulder as he hurries away. Christ seems to have been abandoned to an avalanche of steel. His quiet face resists Judas' glare even as he is cut off from the rest of the world. Although the derivation from Simone is evident, this painter, or group of painters, offers an individualized and pessimistic view of human behavior that is unforgettable.



4.22. Workshop or followers of SIMONE MARTINI. *The Betrayal.* 1330s or 1340s. Fresco, 8'6" × 7'9" (2.6 × 2.4 m). Collegiate Church, San Gimignano.

## Pietro Lorenzetti

Simone's chief competitors in Siena were the brothers Pietro (c. 1290–1348?) and Ambrogio (d. 1348?) Lorenzetti. That two brothers would be successful painters might seem contrary to the modern notion of the artist as an individual genius, but in Siena and elsewhere during the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance a trade would often be practiced by families who would pass their workshop, tools, and expertise down to their children and grandchildren.

The style of the Lorenzetti brothers dominated Sienese painting after Simone's departure for France. Although the brothers almost always worked and signed their paintings independently, they show an affinity of style that is distinct from both the lingering Byzantinizing of the Duccio School and the Francophile elegance of Simone. Pietro's earliest known work, the polyptych still on the high altar of a Romanesque church in Arezzo (fig. 4.23), reveals a mature artist. In the central panel, the Christ Child looks upward at his mother with a happy gaze that is answered by a look of foreboding, typical of the intensity that characterizes



**4.23. PIETRO LORENZETTI.** *Madonna and Child with Saints, Annunciation,* and *Assumption.* 1320. Panel, 9'9½" × 10'1½" (3 × 3.1 m). ▥ Pieve di Sta. Maria, Arezzo. Commissioned by Bishop Guido Tarlati.

The contract for the altarpiece stated that Pietro could undertake no other work until he had completed this, and that he would be paid in thirds, at the beginning, middle, and end. The altarpiece was reduced in size at a later date; some of the panels were trimmed and the predella removed.

4.24. View of the Lower Church of S. Francesco, Assisi. Frescoes, largely 1320s–30s.

This panoramic view was taken from the apse area looking back toward the nave. To either side we see two scenes of the Crucifixion (the one on the left by the school of Giotto, the one on the right by Pietro Lorenzetti), which match the paired Crucifixion scenes by Cimabue in the Upper Church directly above; one of these is illustrated in fig. 2.13. A portion of Pietro's *Descent from the Cross* (see fig. 4.25) is visible to the far right. Also by Cimabue here is the fresco of the *Madonna and Child with Angels and St. Francis* seen to the left of the nave (c. 1288–92). This was later surrounded by the school of Giotto frescoes. The frescoes in the cross vault over the high altar represent allegories of the Franciscan virtues of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, and St. Francis in Glory; these are by a follower of Giotto. The entrance to the tomb of St. Francis is in the nave of the lower church.

Pietro's art. The saints in the lateral panels turn toward each other as if in conversation even as they look out questioningly toward the observer. Pietro must have visited Florence, for the Gothicism and humanity of his art, not to mention the clear-cut features, strong hands, and ample proportions of his figures, reveal a knowledge of the art of Giotto and his followers. Compared with the monumental figures in the Giottesque tradition though, Pietro's figures are less massive. And, in contrast to the works of Giotto, there is an emphasis on the richness of patterned fabrics:

the Virgin, for example, wears a tunic and cloak of white patterned silk, the cloak lined with ermine.

The extent of Pietro's participation in the Passion cycle in the Lower Church of San Francesco at Assisi, as well as the date of the series, remains in doubt. His authorship of the *Descent from the Cross* (figs. 4.24–4.25), however, is beyond question, as is revealed by its dramatic power and bold originality of composition. To accommodate the scene in the limited field available, the upper bar of the cross is truncated, leaving the long horizontal of the cross-bar against a background that, on the right, is expressively vacant. The gaunt body of Christ, the effects of rigor mortis indicated in its harsh lines and angles, is lowered by his friends. Joseph of Arimathea holds the torso while St. John embraces the legs, pressing his cheek to one thigh. Nicodemus, holding an immense pair of tongs, attempts to withdraw the spike from one pierced foot while Mary Magdalen prostrates herself to kiss the other. Mary, the wife of Clopas, holds Christ's right hand, and the Virgin presses his head to her cheek in a way that unites the two



4.25. PIETRO LORENZETTI and assistants. Frescoes of the *Descent into Limbo* (partial view) and *Descent from the Cross*. 1320s–30s. Width at base 12'4" (3.76 m). Lower Church of S. Francesco, Assisi.

That Pietro worked quickly is revealed by the *giornate*; the eight figures of the *Descent from the Cross* shown here, for example, were painted in only six days.

4.26. PIETRO LORENZETTI. *Birth of the Virgin.* 1335–42. Panel, 6'1½" × 5'11½" (1.87 × 1.82 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo for the Cathedral of Siena. The documented pair of saints that flanked this altarpiece is lost.

heads, one right side up, the other upside down. The broad, columnar masses of the figures reflect the impact of Giotto's style; as usual with the Sienese painters, the Florentine painter's influence is more readily seen in their frescoes.

In 1342 Pietro completed the *Birth of the Virgin* (fig. 4.26) as his contribution to the cycle of altarpieces devoted to narrative scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary for the Cathedral of Siena. This triptych, perhaps in competition with one by his brother Ambrogio (see fig. 4.28), established a new standard in the definition of space. The architectural elements of the frame serve as the most forward elements of the painted architecture within the image. The Italian policy of removing all later interventions and restorations has left us with no outer edges, no pinnacles, and no colonnettes to support the arches, which somewhat diminishes the effect of spatiality. Nevertheless, this astonishing bit of illusion creates the feeling that we could enter the room where St. Anne lies on her bed with its checkered Sienese spread as her baby is bathed and neighbors arrive bearing gifts. One woman holds a striped fan to cool St. Anne (the Virgin's birthday was traditionally celebrated on September 8, still the hot season in Tuscany). In the antechamber on the left, St. Joachim receives the good news. Behind him we look into a space that might belong to some ecclesiastical building—a towering Gothic structure of at least three stories, the upper one cut off by the vault of the antechamber. This tall structure must be a reference to the temple in which Mary would be presented three years later.

Pietro's triptych is the first of a series of Italian paintings that presents the illusionistic space of the picture as an inward extension of the frame (for a much later example, see fig. 15.41). In his perspective formulation, Pietro at times came close to the one-point perspective system that ruled pictorial art during the Quattrocento. Analysis shows, however, that the floors in the side panels have separate vanishing points that do not correspond to the one used for the vaults. Nonetheless, the works of the Sienese Trecento painters reveal an interest in exploring how space can be rationally analyzed and represented—an investigation that will culminate in the following century.

## Ambrogio Lorenzetti

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, like his brother, demonstrates the impact of Florentine art. He seems to have visited Florence on at least two occasions: in 1319, when he painted a *Madonna* for a church outside Florence, and in 1332–34, when he painted a polyptych for the Church of San Procolo. During the later visit he joined the Florentine branch of the Arte dei Medici e Speziali, possibly because Florence was part of a "foreign" state and guild membership was required to work there.

In 1342, both Pietro and Ambrogio completed altarpieces for the narrative series on the life of the Virgin for the Sienese Duomo. Ambrogio's *Presentation in the Temple* (fig. 4.27) is even more revolutionary than that of Pietro's *Birth of the Virgin*; space is here penetrated in a
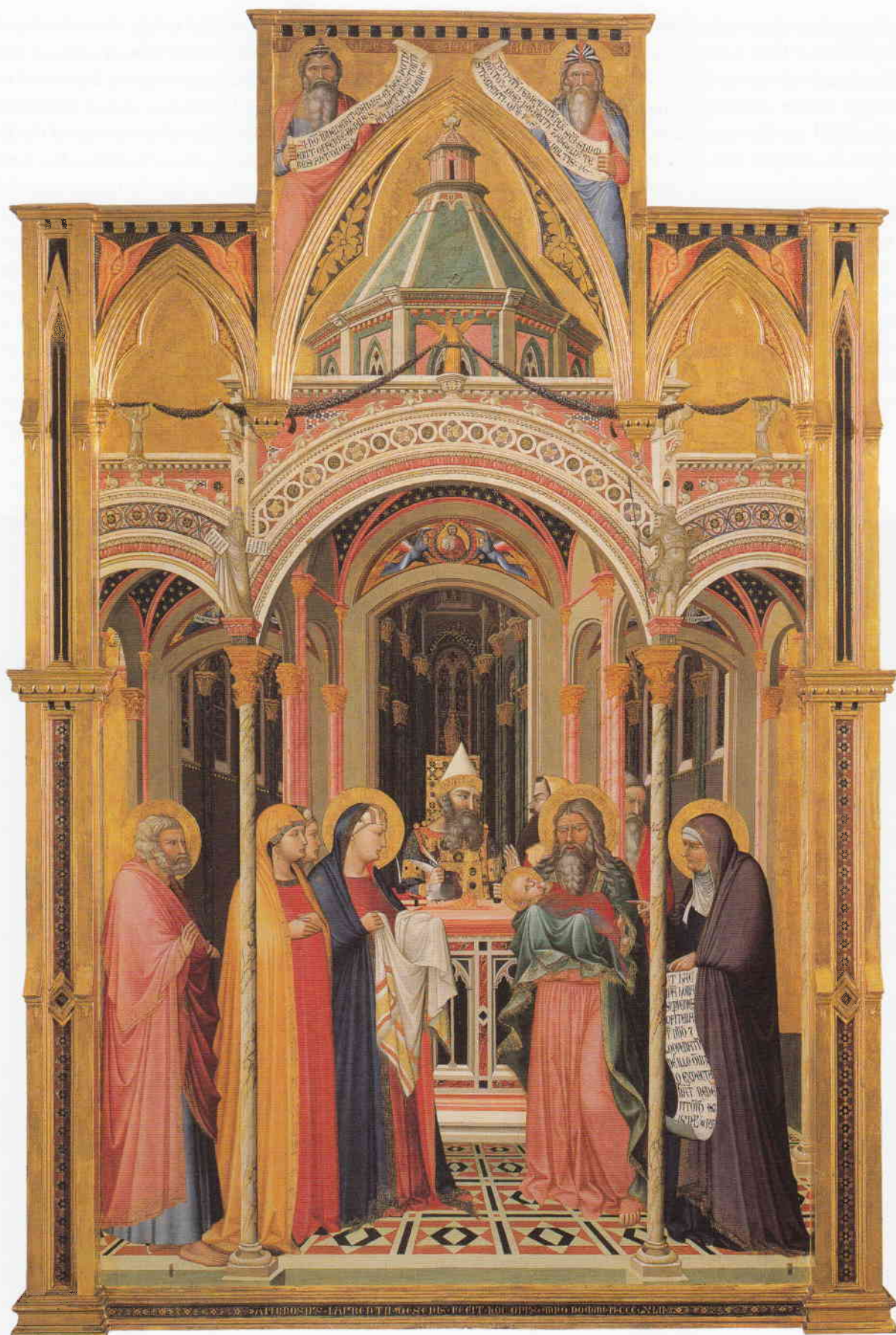
4.27. AMBROGIO LORENZETTI. *Presentation in the Temple.* 1342. Panel, 8'5⅛" × 5'6⅛" (2.6 × 1.7 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo for the Cathedral of Siena. The documented pair of saints that flanked this altarpiece is lost.

manner unprecedented since Roman antiquity. The Gothic frame establishes a lofty gateway, through which we glimpse an interior where the light is dimmed by a stained-glass window. While Ambrogio maintained the double scale of medieval art—one size for figures, another for setting—here he reduced the figures so as to make the architecture somewhat more credible. Slender columns uphold the vaults, which are decorated with gold stars. Behind the altar we look into the dimness of the sanctuary, with its marble columns and gilded capitals, and, for perhaps the first time in any Italian painting, we sense the immensity of a cathedral interior.

The architecture is a strange amalgam of Romanesque and Gothic. In the late Middle Ages, Romanesque architecture was considered to be of Eastern origin, so that the Temple in Jerusalem was generally represented with Romanesque round arches rather than Gothic pointed ones. Also, the polygonal building we see in the backgrounds of such Trecento paintings as Duccio's *Entry into Jerusalem* (see fig. 4.10), which is always intended to represent the Temple, is based on descriptions of the Dome of the Rock brought back by crusaders. In Ambrogio's picture, we see beyond the façade to a polygonal dome with Gothic windows.

Ambrogio has precisely illustrated the Gospel text (Luke 2:22–38), which includes a reference to the offering of two turtle doves, seen here on the altar. The aged Simeon, who had been told that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah, holds the Christ Child and murmurs the words of the *Nunc Dimittis*: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the



4.28. AMBROGIO LORENZETTI. *Allegory of Good Government: Effects of Good Government in the City and the Country* (portion). 1338–39. Fresco; size of the room, approx. 46' × 25'3" (14 × 7.7 m). Sala della Pace (Room of Peace), Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. Presumably commissioned by the Commune of Siena. This room is also sometimes called the Sala dei Nove (Room of the Nine) because this was the council room for the Nine.

face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29–32).

At the left stand Joseph, Mary, and two attendants; on the right the eighty-four-year-old prophetess Anna holds a scroll with the last verse of the passage from St. Luke: "And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Ambrogio depicted differences in age and feelings, from the Christ Child blissfully sucking his thumb and the gentle pride of his mother to the wrinkled age of the prophetess Anna and the weariness of Simeon, who will now be released from the burden of life. The artist's interest in representing the details of everyday life encompasses even the gold-filigree earrings worn by the Virgin Mary, who has, perhaps surprisingly, pierced ears. No examples of such earrings survive; only Ambrogio's interest in the artifacts of daily life document their appearance.

Ambrogio's most revolutionary achievement—one of the most remarkable accomplishments of the period—is the fresco series that lines three walls of the room in the Palazzo Pubblico where Siena's chief magistrates, the Nine, held their meetings (fig. 4.28). Ambrogio's task was unprecedented, for he was apparently called upon to paint allegorical depictions of good and bad government—subjects of intense significance to medieval Italian communes—and to represent the effects such regimes would have in both town and country. The result is the first panoramic city and countryscape since antiquity, and the first expansive portrait of an actual city and landscape. Today, the cycle is usually identified as *Good and Bad Government*, but in 1427 St. Bernardino of Siena referred to it as *War and Peace*, perhaps in part because of its location in the Sala della Pace (Room of Peace). Ambrogio chose the best-illuminated walls for *Good Government* and its effects, leaving *Bad Government* in the shadows on a wall that has suffered considerable damage; the difference in condition suggests that perhaps *Bad Government* was attacked by individuals because of its subject.

The compositions flow in a relaxed manner, without set geometric relationships, much like the irregular city plan of Siena itself (see Map IV, p. 15). On one wall Ambrogio enthroned the majestic figure of the Commune of Siena, who holds the orb and scepter and is dressed in the communal colors of black and white. He is guided by Faith, Hope, and Charity, who soar above him (fig. 4.29).



4.29. AMBROGIO LORENZETTI. *Allegory of Good Government* (see fig. 4.28).

On either side other virtues, chosen for their civic significance, sit or lounge on a decorated bench. To the left, Justice, above whose head floats Wisdom, dispenses rewards and punishments through the two winged figures of Commutative Justice, shown giving arms to a noble and money to a merchant, and Distributive Justice, who crowns a kneeling figure with her left hand as she lops off the head of another with her right. Below the throne of Justice, a figure representing Concord presides over the twenty-four magistrates of the Sienese Republic, one of whom grips a cord that extends from Justice and Concord back to the scepter held by the personification of the Commune; in this physical way the local governors are united to the virtues that should guide them. The reclining figure of Peace is taken from a Roman sarcophagus fragment still in Siena, but Ambrogio's reinterpretation of ancient pleated drapery is so medieval in style that one would hardly suspect a classical prototype if the original had not survived. Peace reclines on armor, indicating that she has overcome war.

The amazing panorama of *Good Government in the City and the Country* (fig. 4.30) is a delightful continuous vista. We are taken through the streets, alleys, and squares of Siena (much as it stands today), over the city walls, and out into the Tuscan countryside. To show us as much as possible, Ambrogio, still a medieval painter, constantly shifted his viewpoint. His world encompasses buildings, people, trees, hills, farms, waterways, bridges, animals, and birds.

In some areas, Ambrogio was almost able to abandon the medieval double scale discussed previously (see p. 80). Most of the buildings are still small in relation to the people, however, for if Ambrogio had painted the people and animals throughout in scale to the architecture, they would hardly have been visible in so vast a worldscape. He boldly represented what seems to be the entire city of Siena, even showing us beams outside windows for hanging clothing or providing leverage to haul things up from the street. He included people conversing, entering houses, or cut off from our view as they pass behind buildings. Through the arches of the building in the foreground, we can enter a shop displaying shoes and hosiery, a school, and a tavern with flasks of wine on an outdoor bar. We also see a house in the process of construction; the

4.30. AMBROGIO LORENZETTI. *Allegory of Good Government in the City and the Country* (see fig. 4.28).

workmen, standing on scaffolding they had probably put in place the day before, are carrying building materials in baskets on their heads and laying new courses of masonry. A young woman plays a tambourine and sings while her elegantly dressed companions dance in the street. Farmers arrive from the prosperous countryside leading donkeys, driving herds of sheep, and carrying produce in baskets on their heads. All have come through a city gate—probably the recently completed Porta Romana. The city wall zigzags from the lower border to the gate, which is surmounted by a representation of the wolf with Romulus and Remus, a Sienese symbol still found throughout the city. Its presence is based on the citizens' belief that Siena was founded by—and named for—Senus, a son of Remus.

The pastoral section is equally daring. Ambrogio seems to have included Sienese territory as far as the sea at Talamone, Siena's new port, in order to display the prosperity of the republic. Vines are tended while grain is harvested and threshed. As the peasants, conversing happily, bring their produce and their animals (including a black-and-white hog, a felicitous reference to Siena's coat of arms) up the incline into the city, men and women descend into the

country to go hawking. These aristocrats indulge in this sport only where the fields have already been harvested, so as not to damage the crops.

Presiding over these activities is the figure of Securitas in revealing classicizing garb (fig. 4.31). She holds a gallows and a scroll: "Without fear, let each man freely walk, and working let everyone sow, while such a commune this personage will keep under her rule because she has removed all power from the guilty." Her hideous counterpart on the opposite wall is Fear, who can be banished only by Good Government.

Our eyes follow the vista over hill after towered hill, farm after farm, the spectacle terminating against the traditional unmodulated blue of the wall itself at the horizon (the first sky with clouds did not appear in Italian painting until the 1420s; see figs. 8.4, 8.9). Ambrogio's landscape is, during the summer months, strikingly similar to the vista visible outside the window of the Sala della Pace. As the landscape recedes, Ambrogio represented details of plants and stubble with a few sketchy strokes, a kind of shorthand that was not more fully explored until the Quattrocento.

4.31. Securitas and Sienese landscape; detail of fig. 4.30.

## Orvieto Cathedral

The vast cathedral erected in Orvieto beginning in 1290 (fig. 4.32) was intended to enshrine an important relic, the bloodstained cloth from the miracle at Bolsena (for the story of this miracle, which was later represented in a fresco by Raphael, see fig. 17.52). In 1263 this relic was transferred to Orvieto, where it was presented to Pope Urban IV. In the following year he proclaimed the Feast of Corpus Christi from this Umbrian hill town.

The cornerstone of the cathedral was laid in 1290, but the façade as we see it today, with its carved marble panels,

bronze sculptures, and mosaics, seems largely to have been the conception of the Sienese architect and sculptor Lorenzo Maitani, who was named *capomaestro* in 1310; a drawing of the design has been attributed to him. He is generally also credited with the impressive bronze figures of the Madonna and Child, angels, and symbols of the Evangelists in Gothic style above the doors, and for much of the finest carving on panels flanking the portals. We know little about Maitani except for the dates of his marriage in 1302 and death in 1330.

The bloody cloth that was to be the focus for worship in Orvieto was enshrined in a magnificent two-sided

4.32. LORENZO MAITANI. Orvieto Cathedral, façade. 1310–1456. Stone, bronze sculpture, and mosaics; each of the still unfinished stone reliefs flanking the doors is more than 30' (9 m) high.

Early documents state that the cathedral should be modeled on the Early Christian Basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome, which may explain the mosaics that decorate the upper parts of the façade. A surviving drawing for the façade and extensive documentation support the attribution of the façade design and much of the sculpture to Maitani, as head of what must have been a large workshop between 1310 and 1330. The decision to build a new cathedral had been made in 1284 and the foundation stone was laid in 1290 but the façade design as we see it today dates from after Maitani became *capomaestro* in 1310; the lower part was complete by 1330 but some of the upper areas were not completed until the mid-fifteenth century, and the mosaics have been restored many times. The bronze doors were added in the twentieth century.

4.33. UGOLINO DI VERIO and collaborators. Reliquary of the Santo Corporale. 1337–38. Translucent enamel on silver with gilded silver statuettes; height 4'7" (1.4 m). Cathedral, Orvieto. Here we show the back of the reliquary because the scenes are in better condition than those on the front, which have lost some of their enamel color. The front and back are virtually identical, except here we see the back of the Crucifix at the apex, and the backs of the angels and other figures on the pinnacles. Commissioned by Bishop Tramo Monaldeschi and the Canons of Orvieto Cathedral, the total cost was 1,374½ gold florins.

reliquary with a gabled shape intended as a reference to the façade of the cathedral, thereby creating an identification between the two (fig. 4.33). The reliquary is adorned with scenes from the miracle of Bolsena and the life of Christ in colorful enamel. The artists are identified on the inscription as the Sienese goldsmith Ugolino di Verio (died c. 1380–85) and several unnamed collaborators. The relic could be removed, and since 1338 both relic and its container have been carried in procession through Orvieto on the feast day of Corpus Christi. For the scenes from the life of Christ, Ugolino followed the representations on Duccio's *Maestà*; for the new scenes representing the miracle at Bolsena, Ugolino drew inspiration from compositions by

Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Perhaps such stylistic connections were requested by the patrons, or they may indicate Ugolino's respect for the traditions of his native Siena. The sumptuous and colorful materials of both reliquary and cathedral façade are an important indication of Gothic taste.

One of the cathedral documents reveals that Maitani's responsibilities included the "wall figured with beauty, which wall must be made on the front part," a reference to the reliefs flanking the doors on the façade. The leading position he holds in the documents has caused him to be identified with the most gifted of the sculptors at work on the panels. The reliefs represent the story of Adam and Eve (figs. 4.34–4.35), the life of Christ, the Tree of Jesse, and
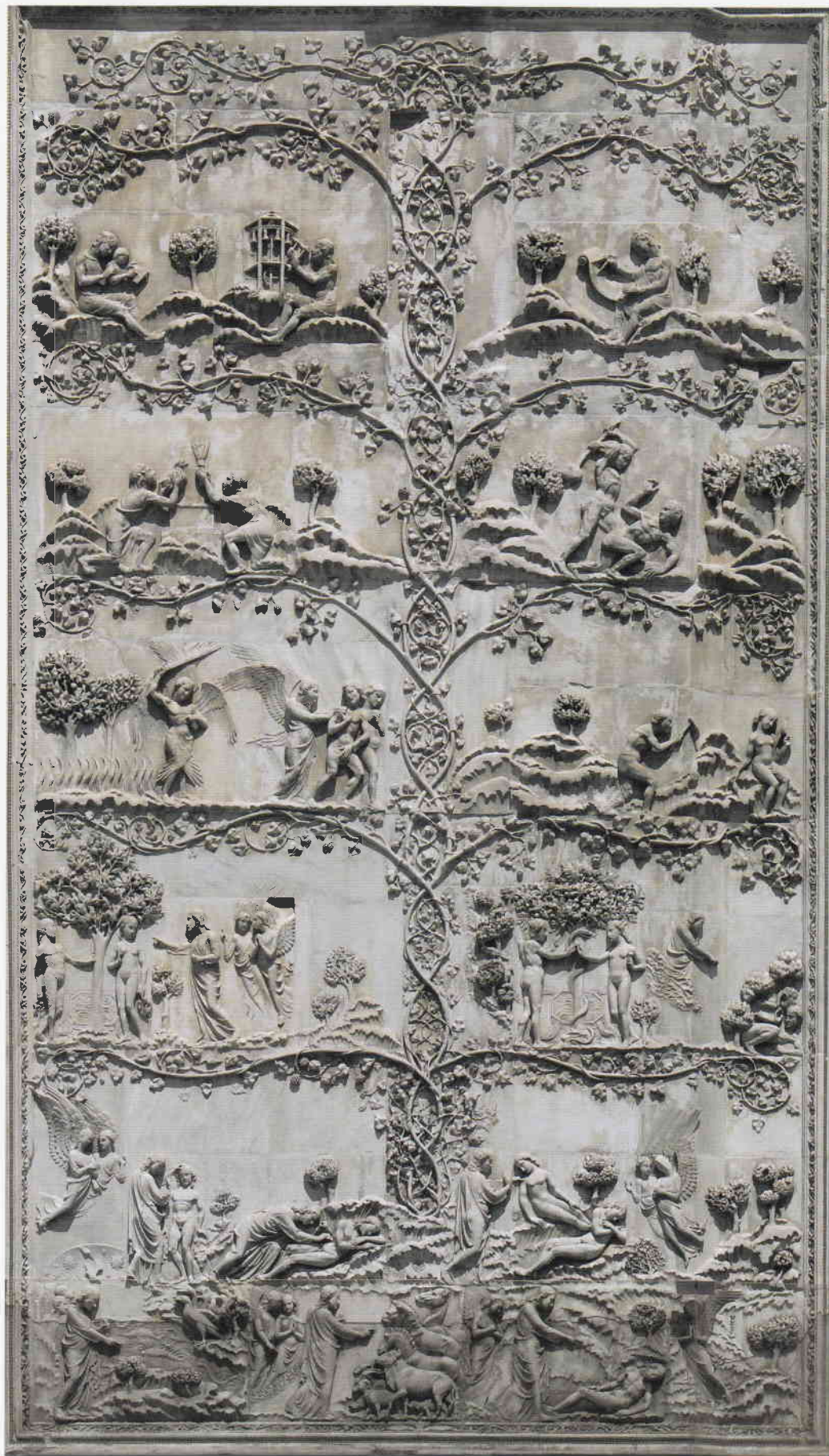
4.34. LORENZO MAITANI. *Scenes from Genesis*. c. 1310–before 1316. Marble. 🏛 Orvieto Cathedral façade.

4.35. LORENZO MAITANI. Creation of the Birds and Fishes, detail of *Scenes from Genesis* (see fig. 4.34).

the Last Judgment (fig. 4.36). The first and last reliefs display the vision of an artist who could create images of exquisite poetry or utmost horror. Maitani and his collaborators dispensed with the customary frame for such reliefs and composed the scenes in horizontal strips with closely packed figures. In contrast to fresco, the work proceeded from the bottom up. In the second row a change occurs: in the center of each relief sprouts a huge vine, its tendrils forming frames for the scenes. In the two central panels the vine is an acanthus, as in Roman medieval apse mosaics, and the scrolls curl tightly. The branches of the vines in the right and left panels are more widely separated, leaving airy spaces above and around the figures. On the left, the vine is ivy; on the right it is a grapevine, recalling the miracle of Bolsena celebrated at this cathedral.

The Creation scenes are imaginative. In the lower left corner, God moves with grace across the primal rocks, calling the fish to life in swirls of marble water and the birds to attention in miniature forests (see fig. 4.35). Maitani—if indeed this was he—took a tremendous step in a direction not to be fully exploited until Donatello and Ghiberti (see figs. 7.14, 10.14): by lowering the projection of distant figures and birds to a fraction of an inch above the background elements, in contrast to the almost free-standing, heavily undercut foreground figures, he was able to suggest effects of distance within the limited field of relief sculpture.

The airy movements and diaphanous mantle of God the Creator, moving among his works, hardly prepare us for the shock of Maitani's view of hell. Here, barely above eye level (see fig. 4.36), the tormented figure of one of the damned hangs by his arm from the jaws of a demon. This dramatic imagery and expressive power characterize the best of Trecento art.

4.36. LORENZO MAITANI. Detail of the Damned in Hell from the *Last Judgment*. c. 1310–30. Marble. 🏛 Orvieto Cathedral façade.

# The Master of the Triumph of Death

Another work to be discussed at this point, even if its author may not be Sienese, is the panoramic series of frescoes on the theme of the Last Judgment and the Triumph of Death in the Camposanto in Pisa (fig. 4.37). In earlier scholarship, these works were dated after the outbreak of the plague in 1348, but more recent scholarship has demonstrated that they are from the 1330s. The anonymous artist, known as the Master of the Triumph of Death after the most memorable of these frescoes, reveals an understanding of both Florentine and Sienese innovations of the period.

The enclosed cemetery next to Pisa Cathedral is known as the Camposanto (holy field) because it contained earth brought from the Holy Land. The walls of the inner court-

yard were once frescoed with vast panoramas from the Old and New Testament, the lives of saints, and sacred history, most of which were lost when an incendiary bomb burned the roof during World War II. One fortunate survivor was the cycle by the Master of the Triumph of Death. When these frescoes were detached for preservation, their *sinopie* were discovered.

*The Three Living and the Three Dead* are found at the far left. While hunting, three splendidly dressed noblemen, accompanied by friends and attendants, come upon three open coffins, each occupied by a corpse; one is still bloated, the next half-rotted, the third reduced to a skeleton. Worms and serpents play over all three. One of the noblemen holds his nose at the stench, while horses and hunting dogs draw back in disgust. No obscure text is needed to explain the meaning of this scene, while its placement in a cemetery adds to its immediate impact. The same point is made again near the mid-point of the long
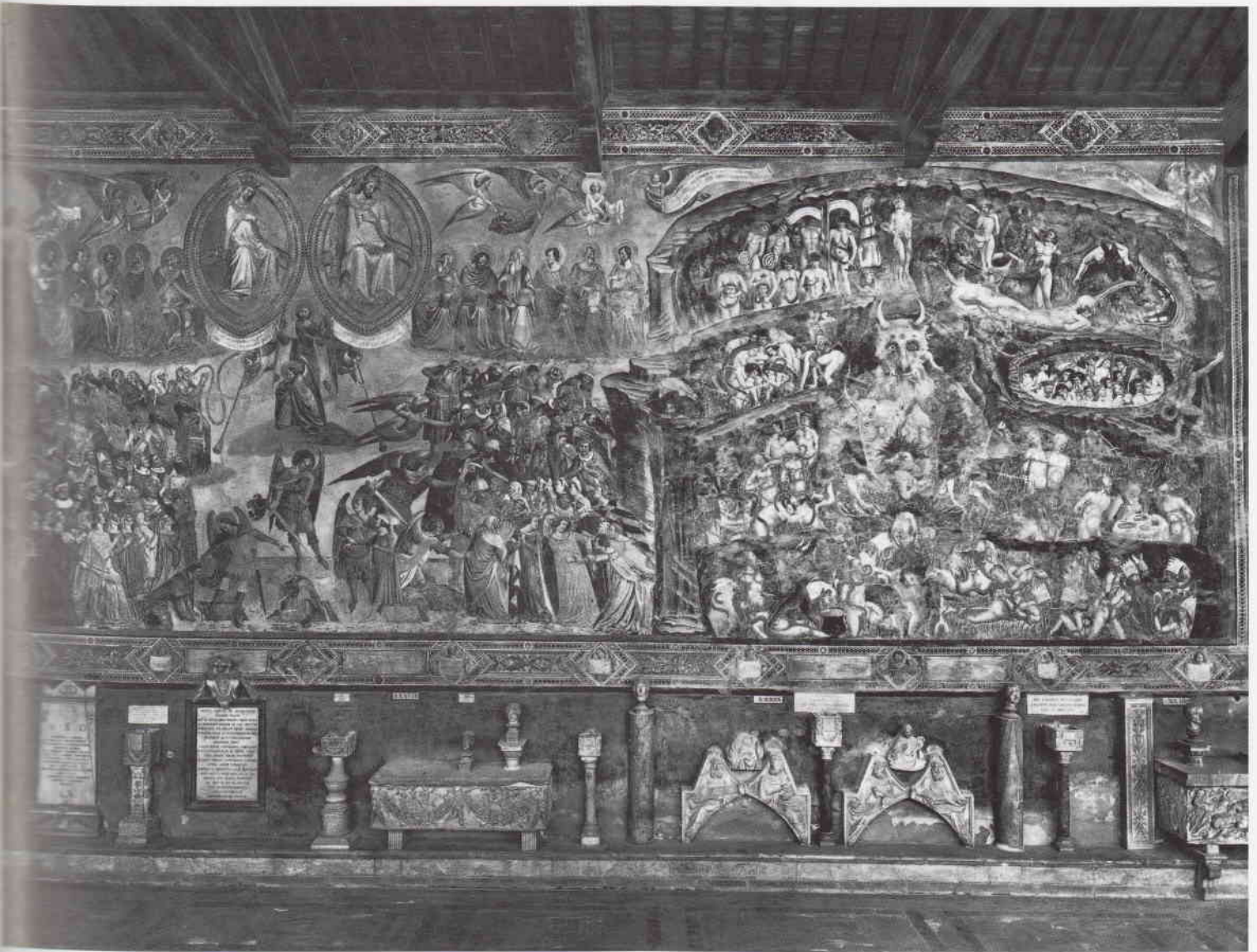
**4.37. MASTER OF THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH.** *The Three Living and the Three Dead, The Triumph of Death, The Last Judgment,* and *Hell.* 1330s(?). Fresco, 18'6" × 49'2" (5.6 × 15 m). Camposanto, Pisa.

The black and white photograph reproduced here was taken before the frescoes were damaged during World War II and subsequently detached from the wall.

wall, where young men and women sit in a garden playing music and caressing pets and each other, oblivious to the approach of Death, a terrifying white-haired hag who flies toward them on bat wings brandishing the huge scythe with which she will cut them down.

In the center of this left section is a heap of Death's most recent victims, all of whom are richly dressed, while above them demons carry off their souls or angels protect them. The soul of one monk is in dispute, for it is being pulled in opposite directions by an angel and a demon. Perhaps the most poignant detail is the pathetic band of cripples next to the pile of corpses, who hold a scroll on which they beg Death to take them instead of the pleasure-seekers to the

right. The possibility of escape from Death is offered in the scene above the coffins, where hermits read, work, and contemplate, fed by milk furnished by a neighboring doe.

In the *Last Judgment*, Christ and Mary are side-by-side in twin mandorlas. While Christ uses his left hand to display the wound in his side, Mary shrinks back in fear. A tempest of emotion seems to sweep through both the damned, who are being expelled by archangels armed with huge swords, and the blessed. The dead arise from square tombs while an expansive representation of hell to the right completes the program. The fresco as a whole reminds us of how art functioned in a culture and society distinctly different from our own.

# 5

# LATER GOTHIC ART IN TUSCANY AND NORTHERN ITALY

I n the first half of the Trecento, the artists of Florence and Siena, especially the painters, created a revolutionary form of art. Their discoveries anticipated the Renaissance; the works of Giotto, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, and Ambrogio Lorenzetti established a foundation for the Early Renaissance, as seen in the works of Donatello, Ghiberti, and Masaccio that we will turn to shortly. Yet the history of art, like that of humanity itself, does not follow a single development and is seldom predictable. In some ways, the art of the second half of the Trecento seems to have little to do with the Renaissance that followed, and thus it is sometimes passed over in a few perfunctory phrases. Nonetheless, during this period artists produced works of striking originality and expressive depth.

In Florence and Siena, the 1330s and 1340s were marred by a series of escalating calamities. In Florence a flood in 1333, exceeded in height only by that of 1966, struck the city with such violence that it tore down 600 feet of city walls and towers along the Arno and brought havoc to commerce, buildings, and, doubtless, works of art. Costly and frustrating military activities and a succession of political and economic crises were followed in the mid-1340s by the failures of the Peruzzi and Bardi banks, chiefly due to the bankruptcy of their English branches, which had become involved in the military adventures of King Edward III. Soon every major banking house in Florence

and Siena went bankrupt, with serious consequences for economic and cultural life. A brief experiment with dictatorship under an outsider known as the Duke of Athens in 1342–43 did little to help, and agricultural disasters during 1346 and 1347 brought widespread famine.

The weakened and demoralized populations of Florence and Siena were in no position to resist when the bubonic plague—the so-called black death, which had already attacked in 1340—struck again in 1348 with dire intensity. The mortality estimates range from 40 to 75 or even 80 percent in both cities—all during one hot, terrible summer. Chronicles written by the survivors present a picture of streets piled high with rotting corpses, economic stasis, runaway inflation, and general terror. The workforce was decimated, and the effects on every aspect of life were devastating.

Artists suffered like everyone else. Bernardo Daddi, Andrea Pisano, and probably Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti died in the plague. In Florence only Taddeo Gaddi survived to carry the tradition of Giotto into the second half of the century. The demand for works of art seems also to have changed; in the wave of guilt and self-blame that follows catastrophe, religion offered both an explanation, in terms of divine wrath, and the consolation of the belief in eternal life. The new style that developed at this time has been interpreted in a variety of ways. One reading is that in some works there was a turn toward the

*Opposite:* 5.1. ANDREA DA FIRENZE. *Triumph of the Church* (below) and the *Navicella* (above). c. 1366–68. Fresco, width of wall 31'6" (9.6 m). Chapter House, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence.
Building and decoration commissioned by Mico di Lapo Guidalotti, a rich merchant and high public official whose brother Branca provided 200 florins of the total cost of 700 florins. They were permitted to use the chapel for burial and to have Masses said daily there for the salvation of their souls. The payment for the frescoes was a house valued at 65 florins. The Chapter House at Sta. Maria Novella is now misleadingly known as the Spanish Chapel because of its use in the sixteenth century by the Spanish community in Florence.

supernatural and a return to the Italo-Byzantine style as a retreat from the humanity and naturalist effects of the early Trecento. An alternate interpretation by Hayden Maginnis sees the new art not as a denial of the old, but as a development that heightens or transforms certain aspects; he refers to it as a "mannered" style.

## Mid-Trecento Art in Florence

An altarpiece painted by Andrea Orcagna (active c. 1343–1368) for the Strozzi Chapel in the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (figs. 5.2–5.3)

reveals the new style. At first glance the elements of Giotto's style seem to be present, but an examination reveals that the figural composition is locked in a rigid and formal pattern. In the center Christ is frontally enthroned but no throne is visible; he appears as an apparition framed in a mandorla by seraphim. Fixing the viewer with a hypnotic gaze, but without looking at either of the kneeling saints, Christ hands the keys to St. Peter, the "rock" on whom the Church was founded, and presents a book to St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the most important Dominican saints and patron saint of the donor, Tommaso Strozzi. The equation of Thomas with Peter suggests the important



5.2. View of the Strozzi Chapel with altarpiece by ANDREA ORCAGNA (see fig. 5.3) and fresco cycle by NARDO DI CIONE of the *Last Judgment* (rear wall), *Paradise* (left wall), and *Hell* (right wall) executed in the 1350s. ⛪ Sta. Maria Novella, Florence (see fig. 2.35). Commissioned by Tommaso di Rossello Strozzi. The figures in the stained glass, also by Nardo di Cione, are the Madonna and Child and the Dominican saint Thomas Aquinas.
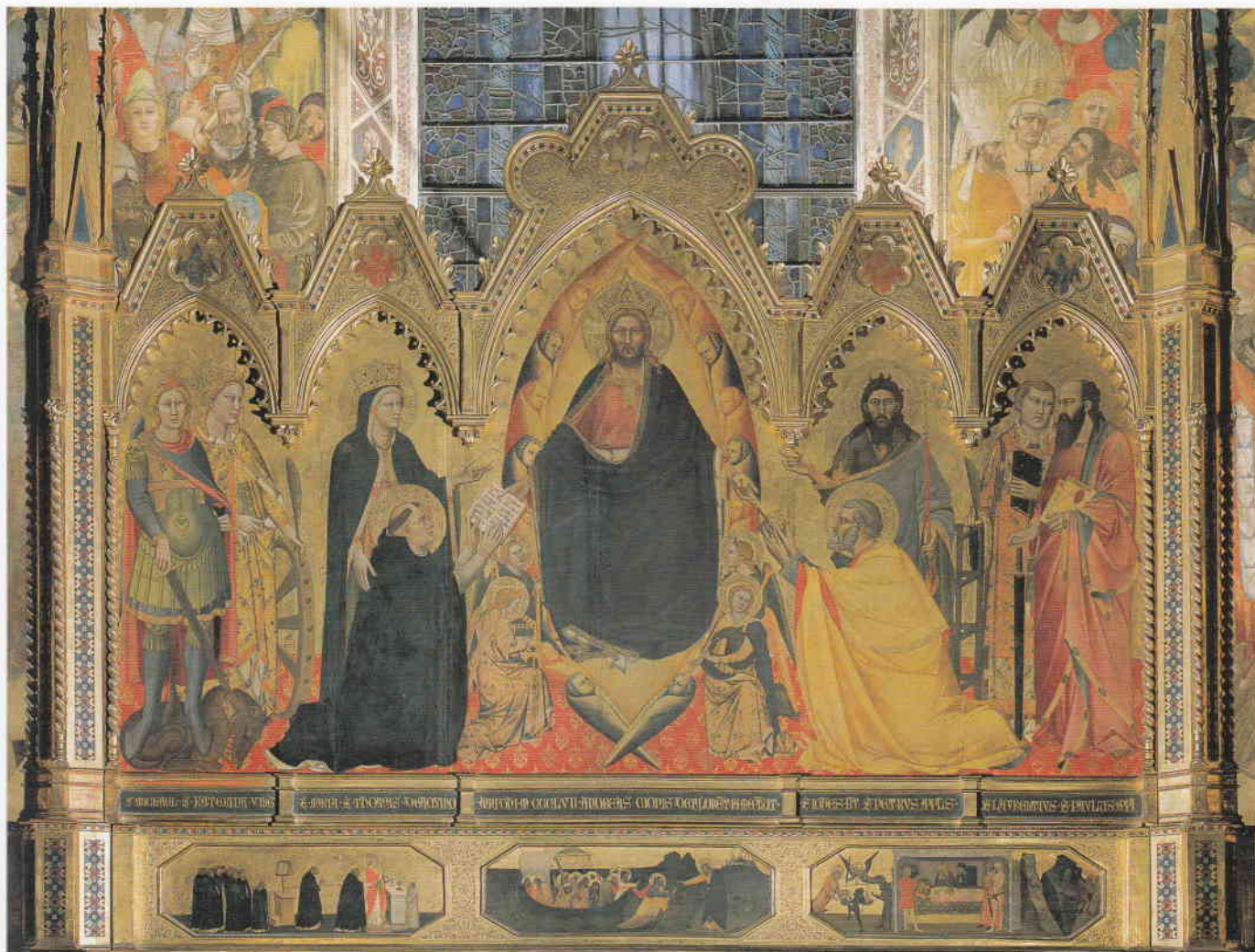
5.3. ANDREA ORCAGNA. *Enthroned Christ with Madonna and Saints.* 1354–57. Panel, approx. 9' × 9'8" (2.74 × 2.95 m). Strozzi Chapel, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. The splendid frame is original.

role of theology in the ideology of the Dominicans. Behind these paired symbols of ecclesiastical authority—historic and intellectual, papal and Dominican—stand Mary, patron of the church, and John the Baptist, patron of Florence. Space is ambiguous because the gold-figured carpet is flat rather than giving any suggestion that it recedes into depth. On the outer panels saints holding swords (Michael and Paul) guard the flanks while those with instruments of martyrdom (Catherine and Lawrence) stand within.

The emphasis on a linear definition of form is a change from the soft roundness characteristic of Giotto's works. In the head of St. Peter, there is an insistence on every line of the intricately curled beard and waved, crisply cut hair. Even the complex shapes of the drapery are sharply delineated. St. John the Baptist, his locks of hair writhing like flames, looks outward with an expression of mystic exaltation. Only the female or youthful faces are calm. Thomas Aquinas's distinctive face seems to be a portrait of a living individual.

Two predella scenes are directly related to the saints: Thomas Aquinas is shown in ecstasy during the celebration of Mass, and Christ walks on water to save Peter. The third scene, which represents the saving of the soul of the Emperor Henry II, is unrelated to any figure above. According to the story, Henry's soul hung in the balance until he made a gift of a golden chalice to the Cathedral of Bamberg. Perhaps Tommaso Strozzi expected his gift of this altarpiece to determine matters in his favor at the time of his own death, which occurred a few years later.

Orcagna joined the Arte di Pietra e Legname in 1352 and in 1355 was made *capomaestro* of Orsanmichele (see fig. 7.1). Probably in the same year he began a fantastic tabernacle (fig. 5.4) to enshrine a large painting of the *Madonna and Child Enthroned* by Bernardo Daddi, for which money was collected in late 1348, after the terrible summer of the black death. The scale—more than 36 feet tall—and magnificent materials were made possible by the tremendous sums given to Orsanmichele as a result of the
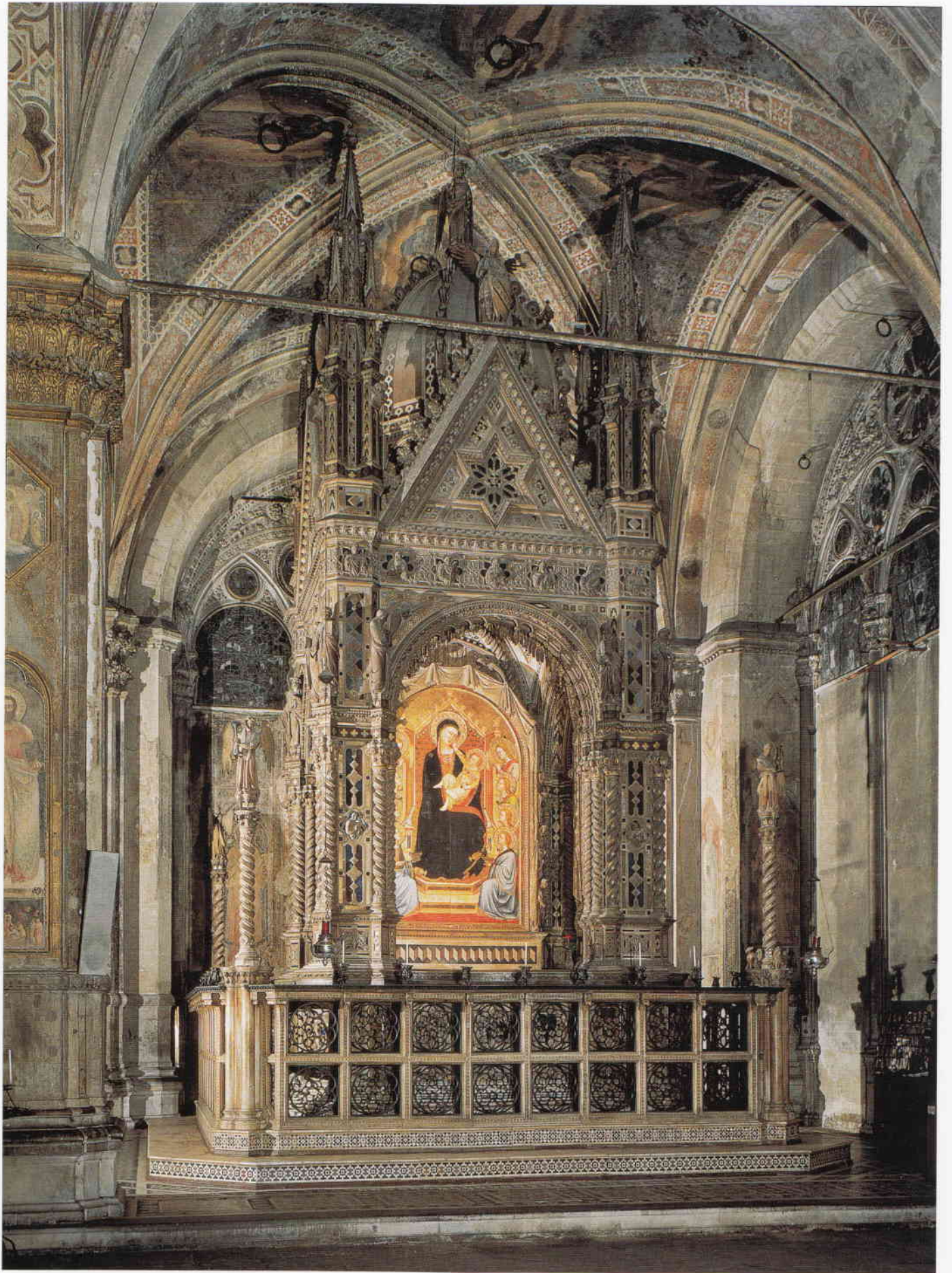
5.5. ANDREA ORCAGNA. *Birth of the Virgin*, detail of fig. 5.4.
Marble with glass mosaic background; height 11¾" (30 cm).
Orsanmichele, Florence.



5.6. ANDREA ORCAGNA. *Death and Assumption of the Virgin*,
detail of fig. 5.4. Marble with inlaid gold mosaic background;
4' (1.22 m). Orsanmichele, Florence.

plague. The tabernacle is rich with sculpted reliefs and
figures, and its white marble architecture is encrusted with
inlaid ornament in blue, gold, and patterned glass.
Orcagna's transformation of the Gothic style into a richer,
more highly decorated mode is evident from a comparison
with the lucidity of Giotto's design for the Campanile of
the Cathedral of Florence (see fig. 3.24). Narration has
also changed, as demonstrated by comparing Orcagna's
*Birth of the Virgin* from the tabernacle (fig. 5.5) with
Cavallini's mosaic of the same subject (see fig. 2.18). In
Orcagna's relief, the floor is tilted upward and the bed cur-
tains are parted like those of a stage to display narrative
and decorative details. The midwife admires the swaddled
child, for example, and a background figure holds a
pitcher and tray of the sort customarily given to Florentine
mothers after the birth of a male child (see fig. 12.3 for a
later example). Note too the bedroom walls of unplastered

masonry, the interior shutters with their nailheads, and
even the keyholes in the linen chest (such chests formed the
pedestals of Italian beds of the period; see figs. 4.16, 9.5).
All this represents a departure from the restrained reliefs of
Andrea Pisano (see figs. 1.11, 3.34).

The *Death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary* on the
back of the tabernacle (fig. 5.6) could originally be viewed
by Trecento Florentines walking on the main street from
the civic center at Palazzo della Signoria to the Duomo,
since Orsanmichele's loggia was then still open (see Map II
and fig. 7.1). The theme is an important one in Tuscany, as
the relic of the Virgin's sash, dropped as she was lifted to
heaven, is believed to be preserved in the nearby town of
Prato. No sash is evident between the hands of Mary and
St. Thomas, to whom she gave the relic, suggesting that
perhaps a real piece of cloth may have animated the image,
moving in the air from the busy street. When the loggia

5.4. ANDREA ORCAGNA. Tabernacle. Probably begun 1352; finished 1359. White Carrara marble, green marble from Prato, and red
Maremma conglomerate with mosaic in colored glass (some with silver and gold underlining) and inlaid stone, gold, lapis lazuli, metal wings and
swords; height approximately 36'1" (11 m.); width at base approximately 13'9" (4.2 m). Orsanmichele, Florence. In the tabernacle: *Madonna
and Child Enthroned* by Bernardo Daddi, 1347. Commissioned by the Compagnia della Madonna di Orsanmichele. Only a few of the
tabernacle's 117 reliefs and statues, which include angels, virtues, the twelve apostles, and the ancestors of Christ, are visible in this view.

5.7. NARDO DI CIONE. *Madonna and Child with Sts. Peter and John the Evangelist.* Probably c. 1360. Tempera on panel, height 30" (76.2 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Kress Collection).

was open, the inlaid patterns would have scintillated in the natural and reflected light or, after dark, in response to the lighted candles held by the sculpted angels that surround the scene. The sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti later reported that the tabernacle had cost 86,000 florins—a stupendous sum. To emphasize his authorship, Orcagna included both his signature and, in the figure of St. Andrew to the far right in the *Death and Assumption* relief, his self-portrait.

Orcagna, whose real name was Andrea di Cione, was one of three brothers (Andrea, Nardo, and Jacopo) whose *botteghe* dominated much of the third quarter of the Trecento in Florence. Nardo di Cione (active c. 1343–1366) produced the *Last Judgment* with *Paradise* and *Hell* that fills the walls of the Strozzi Chapel where Orcagna's *Enthroned Christ* is the altarpiece. The *Last Judgment* appears on the window wall, while the side

walls are given over to the panoramic representations of paradise and hell (see fig. 5.2).

Nardo's beautifully preserved Washington triptych (fig. 5.7) is typical of the kind of small-scale folding paintings used to aid private devotions. The elegant proportions of the Madonna are typical of Nardo's reinterpretation of the style of Giotto, as is the richly tooled decoration. The almost perfect condition of the painted surface here is exceptional; the wings apparently remained closed for centuries, protecting the surface from dirt, fading, or other discoloration, as well as from rubbing or retouching. This is one of the best-preserved of Italian fourteenth-century pictures, and it can be used as a standard against which to measure the condition and original qualities of other tempera paintings of this period.

A fascinating figure in the complex picture of the third quarter of the Trecento in Florence is Andrea Bonaiuti, known as Andrea da Firenze (active c. 1343–1377). Little of his work now survives, with the exception of a panoramic series of frescoes in the Chapter House at Santa Maria Novella, where the monks met regularly to discuss issues of governance (figs. 5.1, 5.8). Andrea converted the interior into a vast panorama surpassing in scale even the *Government* frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (see figs. 4.28–4.31). Here, however, the theme is ecclesiastical rather than secular government, and it was clearly the intent of the patron, a wealthy merchant, and of the Dominican monks who reside at Santa Maria Novella, to emphasize the role of the Dominican Order in the Church hierarchy's enforcement of dogma. All the frescoes make reference to the sacred origins and supreme power of the Roman Church in general and to the importance of the Dominican Order in particular. Perhaps the most unusual is the scene known as the *Triumph of the Church* (sometimes called the *Road to Salvation*; see fig. 5.1).

This fresco covers one whole wall of the Chapter House. The lower part is concerned with religious life on earth and the upper part with heaven; the area between is controlled by the Dominican Order. A detailed representation of the Duomo of Florence, then incomplete and never to be finished as it is shown here, is intended to refer to the Church on earth; it was perhaps also a reminder that, at this time, the archbishop of Florence was a Dominican, and Andrea was one of the Duomo's consulting architects. The reigning pope, Urban V, is enthroned in the center of this section, with ecclesiastics on his right and subservient secular rulers on his left. The sheep at his feet, symbolizing the Christian flock, are guarded by black-and-white dogs—the *domini canes* (a play on the word "Dominicans" that translates as "dogs of the Lord")—and a crowd of ecclesiastical and secular figures gathers before the thrones.

On the right-hand side is the world outside the fortress of the Church, where black-and-white dogs attack wolves and Dominican saints admonish heretics and refute

5.8. Iconographic diagram of Andrea da Firenze's fresco cycle in the Chapter House (Spanish Chapel), Sta. Maria Novella, Florence (see fig. 2.35). Computerized diagram by Sarah Loyd Cameron.

1. *Navicella* (see fig. 5.1).
2. *Christ Carrying the Cross.*
3. *Crucifixion.*
4. *Harrowing of Hell.*
5. *Three Marys at the Tomb.*
6. *Resurrection.*
7. *Noli Me Tangere.*
8. *Ascension.*
9. *Pentecost.*
10. *Apotheosis of St. Thomas Aquinas.*
11. *Triumph of the Church* (see fig. 5.1).
12–17. *Scenes of the Life of St. Peter Martyr.*



SPANISH CHAPEL

ENTRANCE        ALTAR
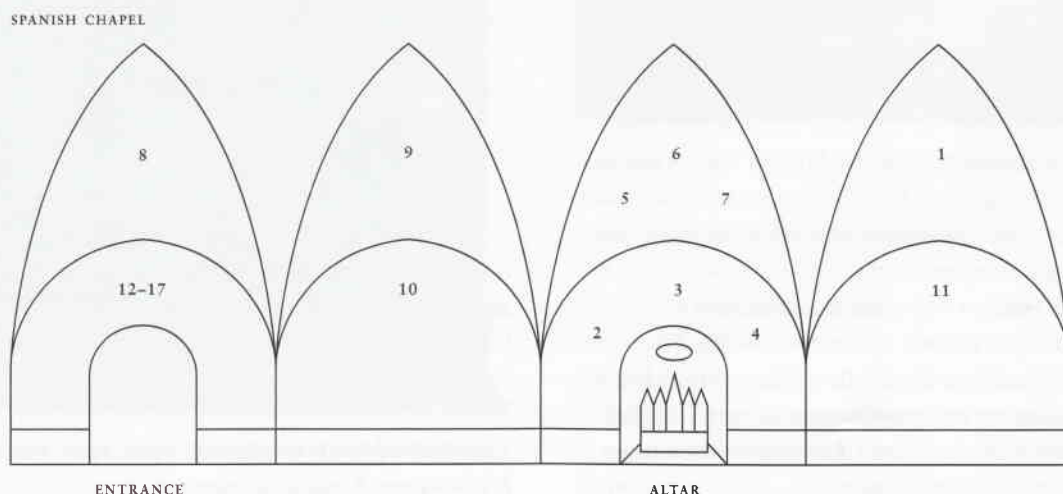
pagans. Above these groups, worldly figures dance in the fields, make music, and embrace in the bushes. These sinners can be rescued only by the sacrament of penance, administered by a Dominican, while another Dominican saint ushers the saved into heaven. In front of the splendid gates, opened by St. Peter, angels crown the little souls who then move into heaven. Only the saints in heaven can behold Christ, who, with book and key, floats above. Below him the apocalyptic lamb on his altar-throne is guarded by symbols of the four Evangelists, while angelic attendants praise God. The details, the general composition, and the symbolism all support the didactic function of this expansive mural. The space represented in the landscape is curiously negated by the composition and the coloring, which produce an effect of allover patterning.

Andrea has also been identified as the artist who designed the magnificent rose window on the façade of Santa Maria Novella (fig. 5.9). The subject is appropriate, for all who exited this new church dedicated to Mary could look up and see her final triumph: her coronation as Queen of Heaven by Christ. Stained glass was a medium imported from Gothic France. The Italian concern with narrative, however, means that the subject matter here is larger and easier to read than it would be in the typical Northern Gothic rose window, which is segmented into smaller areas by stone tracery. The central figures, in front of whom kneels the donor, are surrounded by the music-making, jubilant angels who are a standard feature of this subject. The outer circle features prophets in medallions amid the curling tendrils and luxurious blossoms of a *rinceau*—a decorative motif derived from ancient Roman sculpture. Although the subject is treated in a clear way, Andrea has captured the scintillating effect of French Gothic stained-glass windows by the patterning of the



5.9. ANDREA DA FIRENZE. *Coronation of the Virgin Mary with Donor.* c. 1366–68. Stained glass. Sta. Maria Novella, Florence (see fig. 2.35). Commissioned by Tebaldino de' Ricci, whose family coat of arms appear in the outer frame.
While stained-glass windows were often manufactured in a professional workshop, in Florence the artist who designed the composition was frequently involved in the creation and painting of the details on the glass; the suggestion has been advanced that this window was painted by Andrea himself. The prophet in the upper right was restored in the fifteenth century.



5.10. GIOVANNI DA MILANO. *Pietà.* 1365. Panel, 43¼ × 18⅛" (110 × 46 cm). Accademia, Florence.

luxurious draperies, which break down the larger masses into a dazzling display of jeweled colors. The setting of this event in heaven is also communicated by the glowing colors, referring to St. John the Evangelist's statement that in his vision of heaven the walls were "adorned with all manner of precious stones" (21:19).

Giovanni da Milano (active 1346–1366) was, as his name suggests, an outsider from Lombardy working in Florence at the same time. As a foreigner he was less tied than his Florentine contemporaries to the style of Giotto. His *Pietà* (fig. 5.10) represents the dead Christ upheld by the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, and St. John. The manner in which Christ's body is raised by the grieving figures is intended to remind the observer of the suffering that Christ endured for humanity. The intense emotion of pictures such as this reminds us of how art served religion during this period: while we may admire the artist's understanding and skill in representing compassion and grief, those who used the picture in the late Trecento would have understood it as an aid to personal devotion. The absence of any setting and the luminous gold background, which silhouettes the smooth outlines of the figures, have a simplicity that seems almost modern, but their original purpose was to focus the worshipper's attention on the inner meaning of Christ's sacrifice. The Pietà became an important theme in Italian art, and was chosen by both Titian and Michelangelo for the works they intended for their own tombs (see figs. 19.27, 20.17).

## Late Gothic Painting and the International Style

The last quarter of the Trecento is marked by a continuation of the styles seen earlier; revolutionary developments in art resume only in the early years of the Quattrocento. Government was run by committee in both Florence and Siena in order to forestall either dictatorship or revolution. Applied to artistic projects, the result of this patronage seems to have been a leveling process that stressed conformity at the expense of individuality. In this bureaucratic society, which held oligarchical control over all state activities, the most representative painter in Florence was Agnolo Gaddi (active c. 1369–1396), the son of Taddeo Gaddi and the artist whose precepts, following those of Giotto, appear to be recorded in Cennino Cennini's *Book of Art* (see p. 27). Agnolo had at his fingertips the resources of the Trecento tradition, and at his best he fused his Giottoesque inheritance with the compositional and expressive devices of the mid-century artists.

Agnolo's principal work, for which he must have needed a large *bottega*, is a vast fresco cycle of the Legend of the True Cross for the Church of Santa Croce in Florence. On the walls of the great apse (see figs. 2.36, 2.37, 3.19), Agnolo composed on a gigantic scale, and within each composition two or three separate episodes are represented as if they are taking place side by side; sometimes scenes almost overlap. Landscape or architectural elements serve as dividers, in a manner reminiscent of the crowded compositions of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano a century or so earlier. By juxtaposing large and small, near and distant, in tightly knit scenes such as the *Triumph of Heraclius over Chosroes* (fig. 5.11), Agnolo narrated each episode of the story with equal visibility. (For a discussion of the rather complex legend underlying this fresco and the others in Agnolo's choir, see the discussion of Piero della Francesca's cycle of the same theme in the choir of a Franciscan church in Arezzo, pp. 283–88.)

Agnolo's colors are brilliant and varied, and his use of detail suggests the effect of huge tapestries, preserving the integrity of the surface of the wall and unifying the chapel as a whole. In many scenes Agnolo demonstrates his mastery of spatial recession; in the *Chosroes* scene, for example, he uses different ways to suggest depth. Agnolo's landscape devices, drapery forms, and compositional methods seem to have determined the representation of such elements in Florentine painting until the works of Gentile da Fabriano and Masaccio in the 1420s.

The Late Gothic style practiced by Agnolo and others seems to have been what patrons wanted, and it was what the painters gave them for an industrious half-century or so. Among the host of competent practitioners in this final phase of Gothic-style painting in Florence, a single artist stands out: known today as Lorenzo Monaco ("Lawrence the Monk"), he was probably born in the mid-1370s and he died (or ceased working) in 1423 or 1424. His early works seem to have been influenced by Agnolo Gaddi in color, drapery rhythms, and landscape motifs. But the attenuated figures, graceful poses, and sweeping curves of drapery in Lorenzo Monaco's figures also betray the influence of a new style from the north. Because it flourished across northern Europe, from London to Prague, it is known as the International Gothic—a term used also to identify the style of some of the early works of Ghiberti (see figs. 7.5, 7.8) and the related style of Gentile da Fabriano (see fig. 8.2). As far as Tuscan art is concerned, the term "international" is somewhat of a misnomer. For examples painted in northern Europe, it is often difficult to determine in what center or even in what country a work originated, but in Tuscany clarity and firmness usually prevail over the most exuberant Gothic movement.

At this point, we are somewhat out of chronology, for the International Gothic style seen in Lorenzo Monaco's paintings reveals that the dominant influence on his
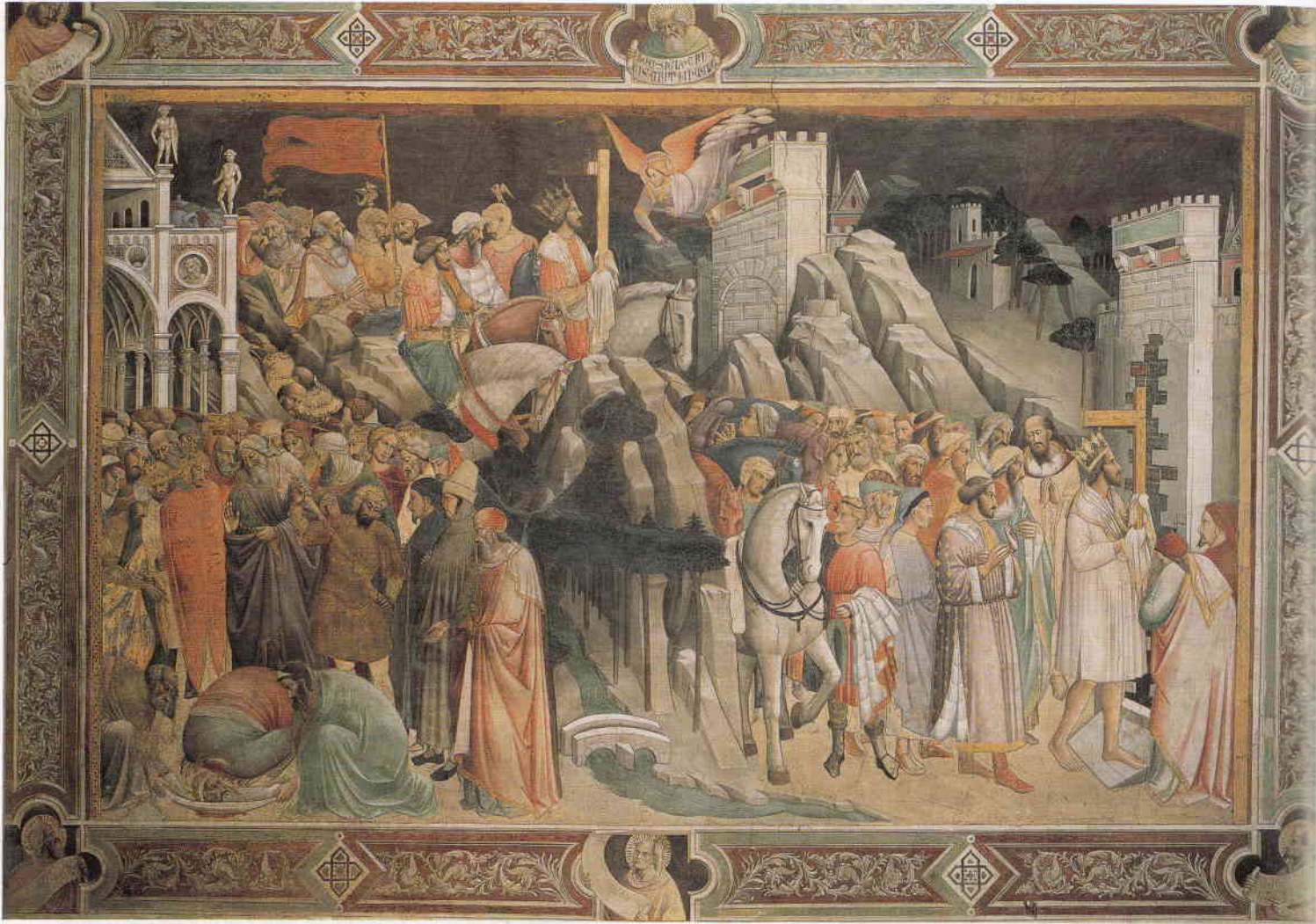
**5.11. AGNOLO GADDI.** *Triumph of Heraclius over Chosroes,* from the Legend of the True Cross. 1388–93. Fresco. Sta. Croce, Florence. Commissioned by Benedetto di Nerozzo degli Alberti (see figs. 2.36, 3.19).

mature style was the work of the sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti, who will not be discussed until Chapter 7. This helps explain the vigorous sculptural quality of Lorenzo's flowing drapery, which resembles the folds in contemporary sculptures by Ghiberti, Nanni di Banco, and Donatello (see fig. 7.11). But to place Lorenzo Monaco where he belongs chronologically would ignore one factor: the first practitioners of the new style of the Early Renaissance were concerned with naturalism, basing their art on observation—an approach to representation that meant little to Lorenzo Monaco.

It is not easy to reconstruct Lorenzo's environment. We know that he joined the Camaldolite Order at Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence in 1390 and rose to the rank of deacon in 1396. By 1402 he was enrolled in the Arte dei Medici e Speziali under his lay name, Piero di Giovanni, and was living outside the monastery. Apparently he retained his monastic status while working as a painter in

the public sphere. The Camaldolite Order was one of the most mystical of the Tuscan religious communities, and this mysticism is expressed in Lorenzo's *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 5.12), which was created for his own monastery, Santa Maria degli Angeli (later, Brunelleschi designed a new church for the order; see fig. 6.20). In the central panel, a tide of colors and forms seems to lift us into the empyrean, beyond the dome of heaven itself, which we see in cross-section, its arches shaded in blue and studded with golden stars. At a Gothic tabernacle, Christ crowns his mother. Above, God the Father blesses the scene, while in the side gables Gabriel makes his announcement to the seated Mary.

Crisp contours and emphatic shading give the figures a strong, sculptural effect. The color composition is based on a bouquet of blues—the dome of the heavens, the blue clouds, the blue shadows, Christ's azure mantle—in combination with the gold background and the dazzling whites

5.12. LORENZO MONACO. *Coronation of the Virgin*. Dated February 1414 (actually 1413). Panel, 16'9" × 14'9" (5.12 × 4.5 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned for the high altar of Sta. Maria degli Angeli, Florence.

The inscription provides a date of February 1414, but it is unlikely that such an inclusion refers to the completion of the painting, which would hardly have been something worth noting at the time. Dates on works of art more likely refer to the date of dedication of a chapel or altar, or to the event that inspired the work of art. February 1414 in the Florentine calendar refers to February 1413 in modern dating, since the Florentines began their year on March 25, the day celebrating the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary and, therefore, the date of Christ's conception.

of the mantles. The figures in white robes at the far left and right are respectively St. Benedict, of whose order the Camaldolites were a branch, and St. Romuald, their founder. In honor of the Benedictines, Mary is garbed in white instead of the traditional blue. The colors from the surrounding saints and angels are reflected in the shadows of these white garments, and even the lightest areas are often emphasized by the use of glowing yellow. Rainbow-winged angels swing censers below the throne.

The scenes in the predella are framed in a version of the Gothic quatrefoil used by Giotto and Andrea Pisano (see figs. 3.5, 3.34). Lorenzo's *Nativity* (fig. 5.13) is based partly on the writings of Bridget, a fourteenth-century Swedish princess who would later be canonized by Pope Martin V. Lorenzo does not show every detail of Bridget's vision at the cave in Bethlehem that traditionally marks the site of the Nativity, but he includes the principal elements, which can be related to a new version of the Nativity that became popular in Quattrocento Florence—the Adoration of the Child (see figs. 12.26, 15.12). In Lorenzo's scene, Mary kneels to worship her newborn child, who is surrounded by golden rays; Bridget commented on the light that radiated from the newborn child. Lorenzo has added to the cave of Bridget's vision the shed from the Western tradition, matching its shape to the angles of the quatre-

foil. The curves of the frame are reflected in the robes of St. Joseph, which unfold below his body like the petals of a rose. In the dark night outside, an angel awakens the shepherds.

When Lorenzo died, he left unfinished a large altarpiece for the Strozzi family; apparently he had finished only the pinnacles. The altarpiece was completed a decade later by another monastic painter, Fra Angelico, who was already working in the new, more naturalistic style (see fig. 9.2). The contrast between Lorenzo's curvilinear figures, silhouetted against their luminous gold backgrounds, and Fra Angelico's sturdy individuals, standing in a landscape filled with natural light, eloquently demonstrates how quickly style was transformed during the Renaissance.

This and Lorenzo Monaco's other works represent a final flowering of the Gothic style in Florence. His display of light in the predella panel differs dramatically from the treatment of the same scene by Gentile da Fabriano nine years later (see fig. 8.3), and even seems less real than the rendering of supernatural light by Giotto in the Arena Chapel (see figs. 3.8–3.9). Lorenzo Monaco's visual poetry might be described as imaginative and unreal. The crucial developments of the early Quattrocento, on the other hand, were based on a new interest in the realities of daily human experience.



5.13. LORENZO MONACO. *Nativity,* on the predella of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 5.12). 1414. Panel, 12½ × 21" (32 × 53 cm).

# Painting and Sculpture in Northern Italy

In the late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance, the political life of northern Italy was dominated by relations between Venice and Milan, the two most important city-states, and their occasional interaction with such smaller centers as Mantua, Ferrara, Padua, and Brescia, whose communal governments had, at varying moments, been taken over by princes who founded hereditary dynasties. Milan, near the northern edge of the Lombard plain, controlled trade routes to northern Europe. Once the capital of the Western Roman Empire, it became a flourishing commercial center. Its territory, however, was landlocked until Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti gained temporary control of Pisa in the opening years of the Quattrocento. Opposition to this Milanese imperialism, which aimed at domination of the Italian peninsula, came from Florence and was eventually successful. Florence found its only ally in republican Venice, whose outburst of independent artistic activity began in the middle of the Quattrocento and continued throughout the Cinquecento.

THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC. The very existence of Venice is amazing. The city was founded in the fifth and sixth centuries on marshy islets of the Adriatic by refugees from the Roman cities of the Po Valley who were fleeing barbarian invaders. Deprived of their territory and homes, the settlers turned to the sea as their resource and protection. The Venetian Republic—actually an oligarchy of aristocratic families with an elected duke (*doge* in Venetian dialect)—became the only state in Western Europe to survive from antiquity into modern times without revolution, invasion, or conquest, enduring from the last years of the Roman Empire until Napoleon abolished it in 1797.

Venice was the only Italian state to achieve an extensive empire. For many centuries the Venetians disliked and distrusted land power; their interest was in commerce and their riches were fantastic—both had to be protected. The security of the city was not hard to maintain; its lagoons were superior to any fortifications devised by land-based states and the Venetian navy was the equal of its maritime rivals. Sea commerce needed bases, which the Venetians developed throughout the Adriatic, Ionian, and Aegean seas. The Most Serene Republic of St. Mark—"La Serenissima," as Venice was termed in legal documents—took over ports down the Adriatic coast and throughout the Greek islands, and, after the capture of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204, enjoyed extraterritorial possession of a quarter of that imperial city. The colorful pageantry of Venetian art is directly related to the city's history and topography: ships, flags, exotic garments, and wares of many nations mingled here, and the palaces of brick, limestone, or marble are still illuminated today by both reflections from the water and the direct light of the sun.

The sources for Duecento and Trecento Venetian art were largely in the East. Inspired by the Byzantine mosaics they had seen in Greece and Constantinople, and sometimes importing Byzantine mosaicists, the Venetians set to work covering the interior of the Basilica of San Marco with more than 40,000 square feet of glittering mosaics. With the lower walls sheathed in slabs of veined marble, the effect was and is one of sumptuous richness.

In the Duecento, a lively school of panel painting based closely on Byzantine models arose in Venice, but Venetian painting found its first authoritative voice in Paolo Veneziano, whose signed works can be dated from the 1320s to the 1360s. His works exemplify the refinement of Italo-Byzantine style. In Paolo's earliest dated work, the *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 5.14), the freedom, freshness, and brilliance of the color epitomize Venetian taste.
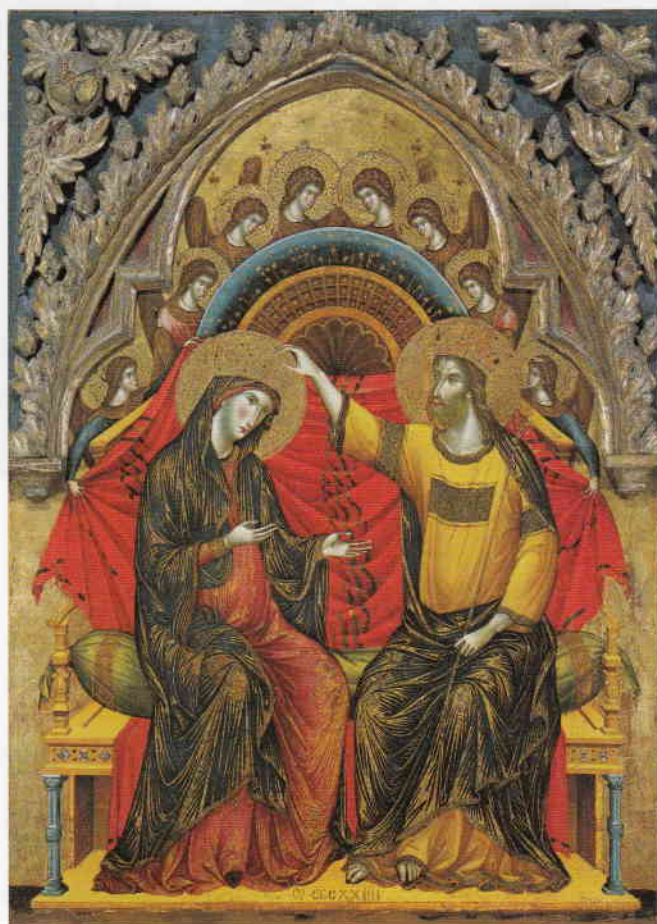


5.14. PAOLO VENEZIANO. *Coronation of the Virgin.* 1324. Tempera on panel, 39 × 30½" (100 × 78 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Kress Collection).

Unlike Tuscan painting, no clear-cut forms emerge; the picture is swept by waves of different colors and patterns, forming a web of color and lines, like a luxurious fabric. As we study the splendid surfaces of Venetian art, it is relevant to remember that the Venetians dealt principally in spices and silks.

As in many other cities, the new Franciscan and Dominican churches in Venice were among the largest religious structures. The Franciscan church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (figs. 5.15, 5.16) and the Dominican Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo (not illustrated here) were both built of brick, which is a lighter material than stone and more appropriate for construction in Venice, while their plans follow the cruciform type, with single side aisles and central apses flanked by multiple chapels. Their spacious naves have Gothic ribbed cross-vaults, with wooden tie-rods to constrain the outward thrust of the vaulting, thus avoiding heavy buttressing on the exterior. The supporting piers are enormous cylinders. The massive scale satisfied the need for large preaching spaces, while the austerity of design and lack of decoration were intended to communicate the simplicity the orders promoted. The similarity



*Left:* 5.15. Interior of Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. Begun c. 1330, finished after 1443. Length of nave, 295' (90 m). Commissioned by the Franciscans.
Visible on the high altar is Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* of 1518 (see fig. 19.10). The monk's choir, which has been destroyed in so many Italian Gothic churches, including Sta. Maria Novella and Sta. Croce in Florence (see figs. 2.34, 2.36), survives here. The marble screen dates from 1475 and was carved by Bartolomeo Bon and Pietro Lombardo.
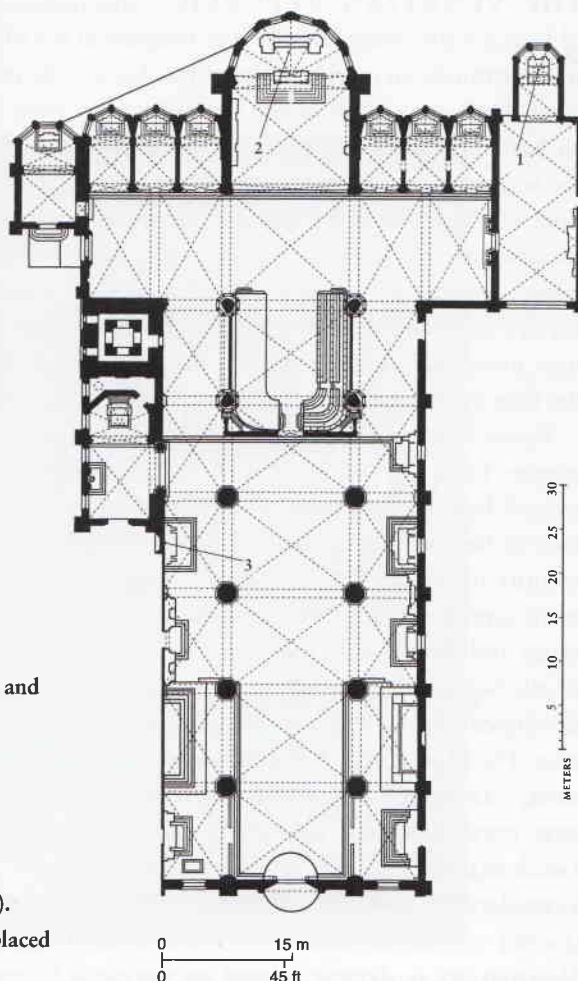


*Right:* 5.16. Plan of Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. From Dehio and von Bezold.
The numbers indicate the following monuments, added to this Gothic church by Renaissance artists:
1. Frari Altarpiece, Giovanni Bellini, 1488 (see fig. 15.42).
2. *Assumption of the Virgin*, Titian, 1518 (see fig. 19.10).
3. *Madonna of the Pesaro Family*, Titian, 1526 (see figs. 19.15–19.16).
Titian's *Pietà* of c. 1576 (see fig. 19.27) was originally intended to be placed over the artist's tomb in this church.

between the two churches and their dissimilarity to Gothic architecture elsewhere suggests that there was a determined attempt to invent a distinctive Venetian variation on the Gothic style.

**PADUA.** The painters of Padua built upon Giotto's achievements; indeed their art may in some aspects be considered a Giottesque revival. The prolific Paduan fresco painters added striking observations of their own in landscape, portraiture, and in the painting of animals. The most successful came to Padua from outside—Jacopo Avanzi from Bologna and Altichiero from Verona. To Avanzi have been attributed most of the lunettes of the life of St. James, painted about 1374 in the Chapel of St. James

(now St. Felix) in Sant'Antonio, while to Altichiero has been assigned the huge *Crucifixion* in the same chapel and some of the lunettes (fig. 5.17).

Avanzi's *Liberation of the Companions of St. James* (fig. 5.18) demonstrates the qualities of the Paduan style. Although Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the Master of the Triumph of Death had developed the panoramic background (see figs. 4.30, 4.37), no Tuscan painter offered Avanzi's kind of nature, both impassable and impenetrable. The human figures, many showing traits of physiognomy and drapery that remind us of Giotto and Maso di Banco, are dominated by the central mass of rocks. In the foreground a bridge has collapsed, and the persecutors following the saint's companions fall into a stream. The floundering horses and humans are represented with striking fidelity. It seems unlikely that a Tuscan painter in the Trecento would have put a horse seen from below in the most prominent spot in the painting.

In density and richness, Altichiero's panoramic *Crucifixion* (fig. 5.19) is one of largest and most impressive frescoes of the century. The columns that divide the scene repeat the arched colonnade that separates the chapel from the nave; by incorporating them into his painting, the artist



5.17. JACOPO AVANZI (attributed to) and ALTICHIERO. Fresco cycle. 1370s. Chapel of St. Felix (formerly St. James), Sant'Antonio, Padua. Commissioned by Bonifacio Lupi di Soragno and his wife, Caterina dei Franceschi, who are represented being presented to the Virgin and Child by their patron saints in a scene not visible here. The architecture, designed by the Venetian sculptor and architect Andriolo de' Santi, was commissioned in 1372.



5.18. JACOPO AVANZI (attributed to). *Liberation of the Companions of St. James.* c. 1374. Fresco. Chapel of St. Felix (formerly St. James), Sant'Antonio, Padua. See fig. 5.17.
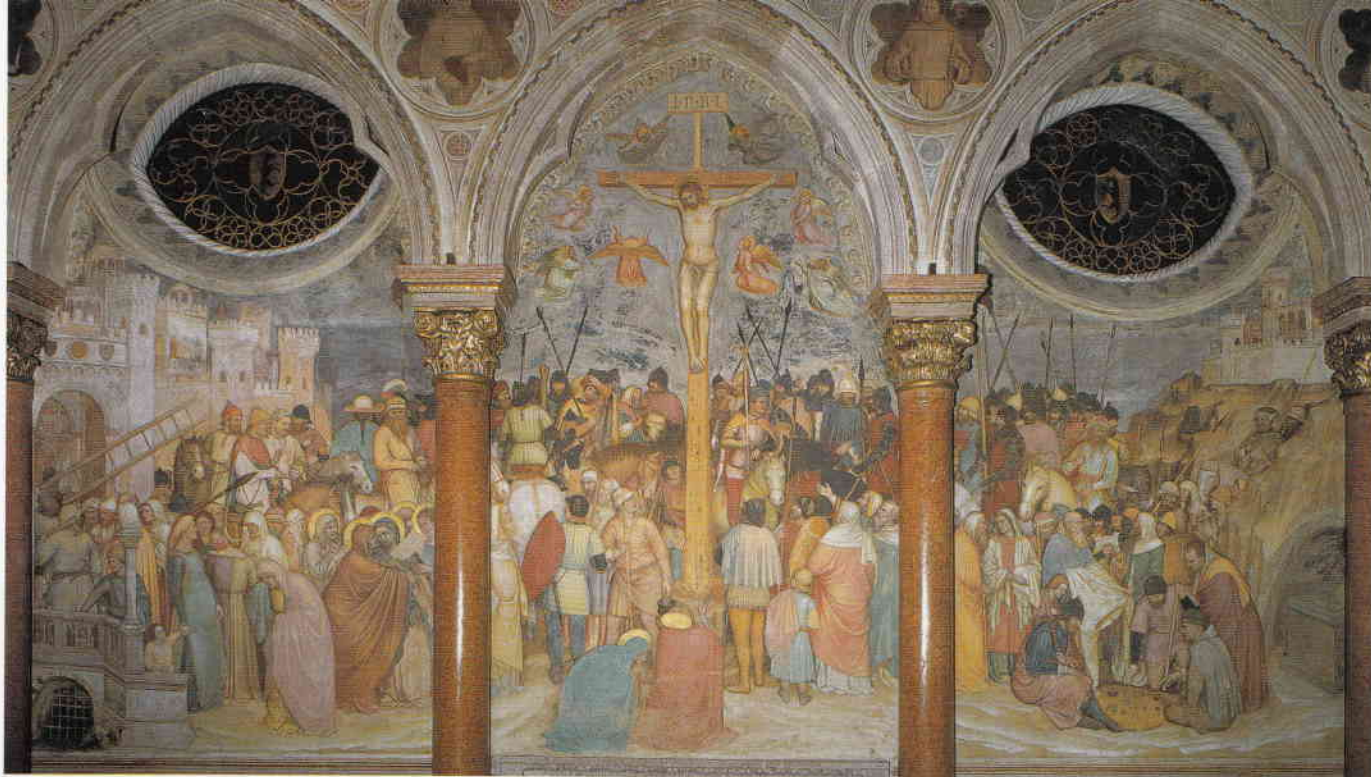
5.19. ALTICHIERO. *Crucifixion.* c. 1375. Fresco. Chapel of St. Felix (formerly St. James), Sant'Antonio, Padua (see fig. 5.17).

makes us feel as if we are viewing the scene through them, giving the *Crucifixion* a greater vivacity. Although the figures and head types reflect the influence of Giotto, the level of realistic detail, especially in the heads, adds another level of veracity to our perception of the scene. Altichiero's soft colors and more diffused light also mark a change from the Giottesque style that dominated during the first half of the century.

**MILAN.** In 1387, Milan lost its communal liberties to the Visconti family, and for the next two centuries the Visconti, succeeded by their relatives the Sforza, held sovereignty over a territory that included, at times, all of Lombardy and much of central Italy. At Milan and Pavia these rulers boasted courts whose magnificence was rivaled on the Italian peninsula only by those of the Vatican and the Kingdom of Naples.

Bernabò Visconti, count of Milan, commissioned a remarkable monument (fig. 5.20) probably from the



5.20. BONINO DA CAMPIONE (attributed to). *Equestrian Monument to Bernabò Visconti.* Before 1363. Workshop of Bonino da Campione, *Sarcophagus of Bernabò Visconti.* c. 1385. Marble, originally with polychromy, gilding, silver decoration, and a cloth flag or pennant; overall height 19'8" (6 m). Civico Museo d'Arte Antica del Castello Sforzesco, Milan. Equestrian monument commissioned by Bernabò Visconti for the high altar of S. Giovanni in Conca, Milan.

Lombard sculptor Bonino da Campione (active 1357–1385). This colossal statue of Bernabò on horseback, originally placed behind the high altar of a church, predates the equestrian monuments by Donatello and Andrea del Verrocchio by many decades (see figs. 10.23, 13.16). In contrast to its dynamic Renaissance successors, which are imbued with the influence of ancient Rome, Bernabò's steed plants all four feet firmly on the base, and the rider, standing boldly up in his stirrups, stares grimly ahead. According to Trecento sources, the statue was covered with silver and gold decoration and the figure held a flag or pennant. Such a mixture of color and media in Italian sculpture is not uncommon; in general, sculpture during this period was almost certainly more colorful than is generally recognized today. Later the equestrian figure became a part of Bernabò's tomb. In 1385 Bernabò was imprisoned by his nephew Giangaleazzo Visconti, who, ten years later, purchased the title of duke of Milan from the Holy Roman Emperor, Wenceslas. Aspiring to rule over all

Italy, Giangaleazzo became, as we shall see, a threat to the Florentine Republic.

Animals constituted one of the delights of the Milanese and other northern Italian courts, and the pleasures of the chase and the joys of collecting rare animals and birds from Africa and the Near East enlivened their art. Giovannino de' Grassi (active 1380s, d. 1398) was architect, sculptor, and painter to Giangaleazzo. He was also responsible for a book of animal studies and for the first half of a magnificent Book of Hours. In initial "D" from Psalm 118 (fig. 5.21), King David is shown enthroned in a Gothic interior. The border ornaments, entwined with gold, are schematic trees that grow from green grass and rocky slopes sparkling with wild flowers. Giangaleazzo's shaggy hunting dogs sniff their prey: three stags and a doe, crouching, climbing, grazing, and even represented foreshortened from the rear. The naturalism and realistic detail of Giovannino and other Lombard illuminators was internationally famous; known to contemporary French



5.21. GIOVANNINO DE' GRASSI. Psalm 118:81. Page from the *Visconti Hours*. Before 1395. Tempera and gold on parchment, approx. 9³/₄ × 6⁷/₈" (25 × 18 cm). Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence. Commissioned by Giangaleazzo Visconti, whose profile portrait is shown in the bottom margin.

artists as the *ouvraige de Lombardie*, it appears to have inspired both the art of the Limbourg brothers in Burgundy, and, in Italy, the work of Gentile da Fabriano (see figs. 8.2–8.4).

Giangaleazzo gathered about himself a talented group of artists from Lombardy, France, Germany, and the Netherlands to build the Cathedral of Milan (figs. 5.22–5.23),



5.22. Interior of Milan Cathedral. Building begun 1385 or 1386, choir and transepts completed c. 1450. Marble from the quarries at Candoglia, in the vicinity of Lago Maggiore, with brick vaults. The cathedral was initially commissioned by Archbishop Antonio da Saluzzio, who was a cousin of Giangaleazzo Visconti. Construction took many centuries; the lantern, for example, was not finished until 1500 and the cathedral was not dedicated until 1577. The façade, many of the upper pinnacles, and the pinnacle statuary were completed after 1805, on Napoleon's orders, and are not illustrated here. The marble was moved by water from the quarries to a dock near the construction site.
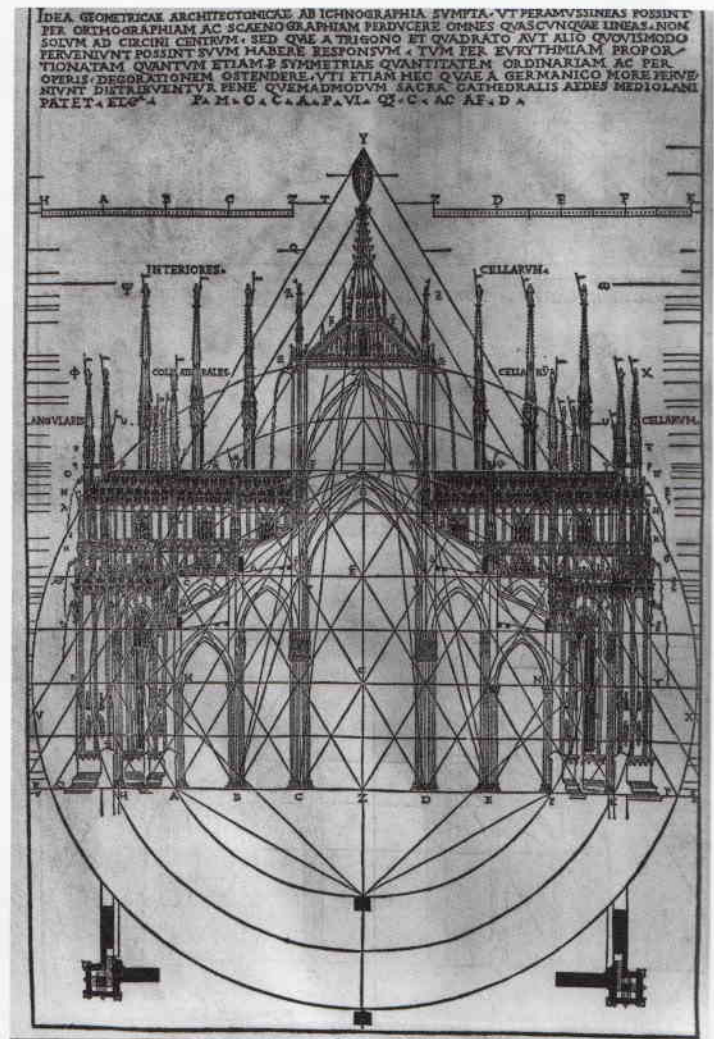


5.23. Milan Cathedral, transverse section of Gabriele Stornaloco's plan of 1391 (as illustrated in Cesare Caesariano, *Comment on Vitruvius*, Como, 1521).

which he intended should rival the great Gothic cathedrals of northern Europe. Documents record debates about the cathedral design between more than fifty local and imported architects, engineers and even professional mathematicians who were engaged by Giangaleazzo. His court artist, Giovannino de' Grassi, served as *capomaestro* from 1392 to 1398. At one point in the process of design and construction, the participants were divided into two camps: one supported a resolution that emphasized practical engineering experience, which at the time was called *ars* (art); the second emphasized *scientia* (science), by which was meant a dependence on geometrical ordering and design, arguing that, without geometry, the engineering experience is nothing: "ars sine scientia nihil est" (roughly translating as "skill is nothing without theoretical knowledge"). The first group capitulated, agreeing that no

architect could ignore the primary importance of geometry in design and construction.

The idea that there is an intimate connection between architecture and mathematics is an old one. In his treatise *De Musica* (387–89 CE), St. Augustine said that the mathematical proportions necessary for both music and architecture were the same as those of the universe, arguing that these disciplines thus aided us in contemplating the divine order of God's creation. While the connection between mathematical proportions and music had been made by Pythagoras in antiquity, it was St. Augustine who drew architecture into the mix.

The overarching role that geometry played at Milan is demonstrated in a print that preserves a proportional plan designed by the mathematician Gabriele Stornaloco of Piacenza (fig. 5.23). The cathedral as built followed a similar but slightly modified scheme with lower vaults. Among the many complexities of this scheme, the height of the side aisles was determined by a series of equilateral triangles. Circles show how the proportions conform to more than one system and how the cathedral can be related to universal harmonies. Geometry also provided a foundation for the earliest Renaissance architecture, designed by Filippo Brunelleschi, to which we will turn in the next chapter.

Geometry brought its own problems, however. Milanese documents record that Heinrich Parler, architect of Prague Cathedral, believed that the great height of the piers at Milan caused a certain structural instability. His suggestion was to increase the height so that the space created would be equal to the width, thus creating a perfect square. Such a move would actually have made the structure less stable, and, fortunately, the Milanese chose to add buttresses instead.

The vast interior—the nave vaults reach 156 feet (47.6 meters) and the area covered is about 126,000 square feet (11,706 square meters)—is both Gothic in its use of pointed arches and ribbed vaulting, and Italian in the modifications to the French system that were introduced. Like many other Italian Gothic churches, it is exceptionally wide and the effect of verticality so emphatic in northern structures is broken by the horizontal emphasis created by the unusual capitals. The scale of the structure becomes evident when we realize that the sculpted figures in the capitals' niches are life-sized. Despite the cathedral's ostensibly religious purpose, its size and grandeur indicate that it was also intended as a statement about the power of Visconti rule.

**TRENT.** An exceptional secular fresco cycle of *The Months* draws our attention northward to Trent, in the foothills of the Alps (fig. 5.24). The theme of the months is not purely secular, for the cycles of nature were considered a revelation of the divine order that orchestrates all of life. The repeated patterns of flowery meadows, leafy forests, and fields with haystacks here are surely meant to suggest the design motifs common in French Gothic tapestries and are a reminder that, during the Gothic period, a secular ruler would prefer to decorate his residence with tapestries than frescoes. While tapestries could provide desirable insulation during the winter months, more



5.24. *The Months*, April–September. Before 1407; restored in 1535. Fresco; each 10' high (3 m); dimensions of room 19'8" × 19'1" (6 × 5.8 m). Eagle's Tower, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trent. Commissioned by Georg von Lichtenstein, Bishop of Trent. Only eleven of the months survive. The draped fabric painted below replaces the original wainscoting, which was painted with a sequence of niches.

important was the impact they made because of their value. Being much more expensive than frescoes, tapestries could convey to guests the wealth, and therefore power, of their host. By suggesting the style of elite foreign tapestries, the Trent frescoes at the very least must have signified the sophisticated taste of their patron.

The frescoes' subject matter presents a revealing indication of how a ruler from this period chose to represent episodes in the lives of both aristocrats and peasants. While we must be careful not to interpret the seemingly everyday scenes here as a mirror of reality, the social hierarchy represented was, indeed, quite real. The Bishop of Trent commissioned an artist to depict aristocrats at play and peasants at work, indicating their separate roles while reinforcing the social fact that leisure belongs to those in power. The difference in scale between the toiling peasants and the wealthy underscores this social gulf pictorially by symbolizing worldly status—or lack thereof.

**VERONA.** The placement of the statue of Count Bernabò Visconti of Milan behind the high altar of a church signified both Bernabò's divine right to rule and his subordinate position to God. The monument to Cansignorio della Scala, ruler of Verona (fig. 5.25), was placed in a public piazza, suggesting to the citizenry that Cansignorio's authority was absolute. It was the last in a series of monumental equestrian tomb monuments erected by the Scala family as hereditary rulers of the city. In a desire to outdo his predecessors, Cansignorio commissioned the largest monument and had it decorated in a rich Gothic style. Figures of soldiers in tabernacles surround the bier/sarcophagus in the middle, while virtues and angels lead our eyes upward to a triumphant Cansignorio at the summit. The metal wings of the angels were probably

originally gilded and the monument had details added in color when completed. The imposing force of Cansignorio's personality is still evident when viewed today; such a presence predicted the later rise of a secularized world view that placed great value on the individual.



**5.25. BONINO DA CAMPIONE.** *Funerary Monument of Cansignorio della Scala.* Completed 1376. Marble, gilded metal, wrought iron. 🏛 Piazza next to Sta. Maria Antica, Verona. Probably commissioned by Cansignorio.

Although the work is signed by Bonino da Campione and one Gaspare (the builder?), it has little in common with other works by Bonino and is probably a composite work hurriedly designed and erected at the request of a youthful ruler during his final illness. Cansignorio, only thirty-six when he died in 1375, had requested that his tomb be the work of "the most excellent sculptors and architects to be found in Italy at the time." He was more interested in art and architecture than in military affairs, and he is reported to have said that "building was a sweet way to become poor." Cansignorio became ruler of Verona at the age of twenty-one when he assassinated his older brother, Cangrande II.

# THE QUATTROCENTO

FRANCESCO DEL
COSSA. *April*
(detail of fig. 15.66).

# 6

# THE RENAISSANCE BEGINS:
# ARCHITECTURE

We have seen indications of the impact of surviving works of classical antiquity, notably in the sculpture of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, but only after 1400 did these remains of ancient civilization become one of the dominant influences in Italian art. The change was so transformative that most scholars agree at this point that we should begin to use the term Renaissance to describe the new developments in Italian art.

The inspiration of antiquity was first evident in sculpture and architecture, while painting—a medium in which few ancient examples were known in the Quattrocento—continued to adhere to the principles of the International Gothic style. But which medium should we discuss first: sculpture or architecture? In the opening years of the Quattrocento, sculpture was the first medium to demonstrate the strong impact of antiquity, combined with significant effects of naturalism (see figs. 7.2–7.3). But the most important sculptor, Lorenzo Ghiberti, almost immediately turned away from the new developments to explore the fashionable International Gothic style. However, when Filippo Brunelleschi revolutionized architecture by using a vocabulary of forms and details taken from ancient monuments, there was no going back. Thus we begin our examination of the Renaissance with architecture.

Before 1400, architecture had remained Gothic, although a Gothic modified in Italy by ideas of clarity and simplicity. In the early Quattrocento in Florence, however, we can begin to trace the development of a new style, inspired by forms and ideas drawn from the civilizations of Greek and Roman antiquity. When the architect and humanist, Leonbattista Alberti, formulated the theoretical principles of the new style in a series of books written some decades later (*Della pittura*, 1436), he referred to the inspiration of antiquity at almost every point while simultaneously recognizing the importance of the new developments being made by his contemporaries.

Alberti points to the dome of the Cathedral of Florence (see fig. 6.7), then being completed by Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446), as a supreme example of the new art:

Who could … fail to praise [Filippo] the architect on seeing here such a large structure, rising above the skies, ample to cover with its shadow all the Tuscan people, and constructed without the aid of centering or a great quantity of wood? Since this work seems impossible of execution in our time, if I judge rightly, it was probably unknown and unthought of among the Ancients.

While Brunelleschi's dome might seem to be the product of a harmonious period dedicated to the kind of intellectual activities that Alberti and his fellow humanists

praised, nothing could be further from the truth. Like so many creative periods, the Early Renaissance (which covered roughly the fifteenth century in most major centers) was an era of conflict and of challenges only partly met. Florence's role in the modern world has often been compared with that of Athens in antiquity, and the resemblance extends to the turbulence that both endured. Only on the ideal plane of their works of art did the Florentines achieve the harmony and dignity denied them by the realities of their epoch.

During the first third of the Quattrocento, the continued existence of Florence as an independent state was in doubt. In 1378 the guild system had come under attack in the short-lived revolt of the Ciompi—the wool carders who occupied the lowest rung of the social and economic ladder. After the suppression of the Ciompi, the oligarchy re-established its domination through the major guilds and the Guelph party. The next threats originated outside the city, from the duchy of Milan under the Visconti family, who were determined to control large areas of the Italian peninsula. By alliances, threats, intimidation, and conquest, Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti gained control of all northern Italy with the exception of the republics of Genoa and Venice, and of much of central Italy, including Siena, Florence's ancient rival; Florence was surrounded on three sides. Eventually Giangaleazzo succeeded in cutting Florence off from the sea, and in the summer of 1402 he was ready to descend on the city. With no alliances except an uncertain one with Venice, modest resources, and no standing army, the Florentines—armed, we might say, with their commercial power and their courage—had prepared for battle. At that moment the plague, always smoldering, erupted among Giangaleazzo's armies, and by September he was dead and his empire had fallen apart. The Florentines rejoiced at their deliverance and returned to their commercial and intellectual activities.

Then another tyrant emerged. King Ladislaus of Naples, having conquered Rome three times, threatened Florence from the south. Again disease came to the aid of the Florentines when Ladislaus died in 1414. Many Florentines ascribed these two deliverances to divine intervention. In the 1420s, a third danger arose, and this time no disease saved the Florentines. Filippo Maria, son of Giangaleazzo Visconti, undertook to finish his father's work. The Florentines suffered one defeat after another before they managed to pull together the resources of the republic. In 1427, to obtain the sums necessary for the war, the Florentines instituted the *catasto*, a tax on wealth that was the first graduated tax in history. The *catasto* was the ancestor of the modern income tax although it did not tax income per se but rather the productivity of the property—including artists' tools and materials—owned by each individual.

There was a system of exemptions and deductions and a personal, written declaration was required. The large numbers of these that survive from 1427 and later assessments form a valuable source of information about Florentine citizens, although it should be no surprise to discover that they frequently misstated information about their wealth.

The war dragged on. Filippo Maria did not descend on Florence, nor did the Florentines defeat him; a prolonged stalemate developed. Nobody really won, yet danger overshadowed the people of Florence for years. In this atmosphere of crisis many of the important works of Early Renaissance art were created. Military expenditure notwithstanding, the Florentines were able and willing to pay for costly structures and large works of sculpture in marble or bronze. One reason for this seeming extravagance was the inspiring civic orientation of the new works. In an article written in the 1960s, Frederick Hartt argued that these works galvanized popular support for the life-and-death struggle of Florence and thus functioned as soldiers in the struggle against dictatorship. These new public works were unusual in that they were meant for the individual in the street, not for the pious in the churches. This appeal to the individual citizen can be related to the civic ideals promoted by contemporary humanists.

## The Role of the Medici Family

The story of Florentine Quattrocento and Cinquecento art is inseparable from the history of the Medici family. While the family's fortunes were founded by earlier members, it was Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici (1360–1429) who, as banker to the papacy, probably the wealthiest institution in Europe, greatly expanded the family's resources. Giovanni commissioned Brunelleschi to design a new sacristy for the old church of San Lorenzo (now known as the Old Sacristy; see figs. 6.14–6.16), one of the earliest examples of a Renaissance interior. Giovanni's son Cosimo (1389–1464) used the family's wealth as a catalyst for developments in Florentine art, commissioning the first Renaissance church (San Lorenzo; see fig. 6.17); the first Renaissance palace (see figs. 6.22–6.26); the first Renaissance monastery (San Marco, which was rededicated in 1443 to St. Mark and the Medici family patrons, St. Cosmas and St. Damian; see figs. 6.27, 9.6); two Medici villas; and works of art by Lorenzo Ghiberti, Donatello, Paolo Uccello, Desiderio da Settignano, and, most likely, Antonio Pollaiuolo, Fra Filippo Lippi, Domenico Veneziano, and the Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden. Cosimo may also have been the patron of Donatello's revolutionary bronze *David*, the first large-scale nude sculpture since antiquity, which is first documented in the Medici Palace courtyard

6.2. *Portrait Medal of Cosimo de' Medici, Pater Patriae.* c. 1465. Bronze, 3¹⁄₁₆" (7.8 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Kress Collection). Created by order of the officials of the Commune of Florence, presumably in the year after Cosimo's death.



6.3. Reverse side of fig. 6.2. The allegorical figure represents Florence, holding an orb and triple olive branch. The inscription reads, in part, "Pax et Libertas" ("Peace and Liberty"). The medal has been reproduced actual size.

(see figs. 6.26, 10.22). In addition to all this, he was a powerful businessman, a subtle and cautious politician, a book collector, the founder of the first public library, and an important intellectual.

Politically, Cosimo was only a private citizen, but he was widely recognized as the man who controlled Florentine politics. After he returned from exile in 1433–34, he transformed the ostensibly republican system so that only Medici partisans could be selected for office. His artistic patronage had implications within the political sphere.

The only known portrait of Cosimo painted during his lifetime is in Benozzo Gozzoli's *Procession of the Magi*, in the private chapel in the Palazzo Medici (see figs. 12.1, 12.24). After he died, the commune coined a medal in Cosimo's honor that identified him as *Pater Patriae*, "Father of the Country," in recognition of his contribution to the city's political and cultural life (figs. 6.2–6.3). In the sixteenth century, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote that Cosimo had been "The Prince of the Republic." Because some later Medici rulers were also named Cosimo, the Quattrocento patron who played such an important role in Florentine life and art later became known as Cosimo il Vecchio, "Cosimo the Elder."

Cosimo was succeeded by his son Piero the Gouty (1416–1469), who was in turn succeeded by his son, Lorenzo the Magnificent (1449–1492). In 1494, Girolamo Savonarola and his followers drove Lorenzo's son Piero the Unlucky (1471–1503) from Florence. The Medici returned in 1512, and ruled Florence until Anna Maria Louisa, the childless daughter of Cosimo III, died in 1743, leaving the family collections to the city of Florence.

# Filippo Brunelleschi and Linear Perspective

Before discussing Filippo Brunelleschi's architectural innovations, we need to consider his role in the development of linear perspective. This system, which allowed painters and sculptors to control the representation of illusionistic space, became widely popular and is one of the hallmarks of the early Renaissance style. Both Brunelleschi's biographer, Antonio Manetti, a follower who wrote later in the fifteenth century, and Giorgio Vasari, writing in the sixteenth, credited Brunelleschi with the "invention" of this scheme.

The impetus seems to have been Brunelleschi's need to make measured architectural drawings. In 1403, after he lost the competition for a set of bronze doors for the Florentine Baptistery to Lorenzo Ghiberti (see figs. 7.3–7.6), Brunelleschi, who had trained as a goldsmith, abandoned the art of sculpture and dedicated himself to architecture. Vasari wrote that Brunelleschi went to Rome to study and to measure the remains of ancient architecture. He probably brought back to Florence measured drawings, views, and details of the great Roman monuments.

The perspective scheme that Brunelleschi developed in Rome allowed him to make drawings that captured both the appearance of an ancient ruin and, by including a
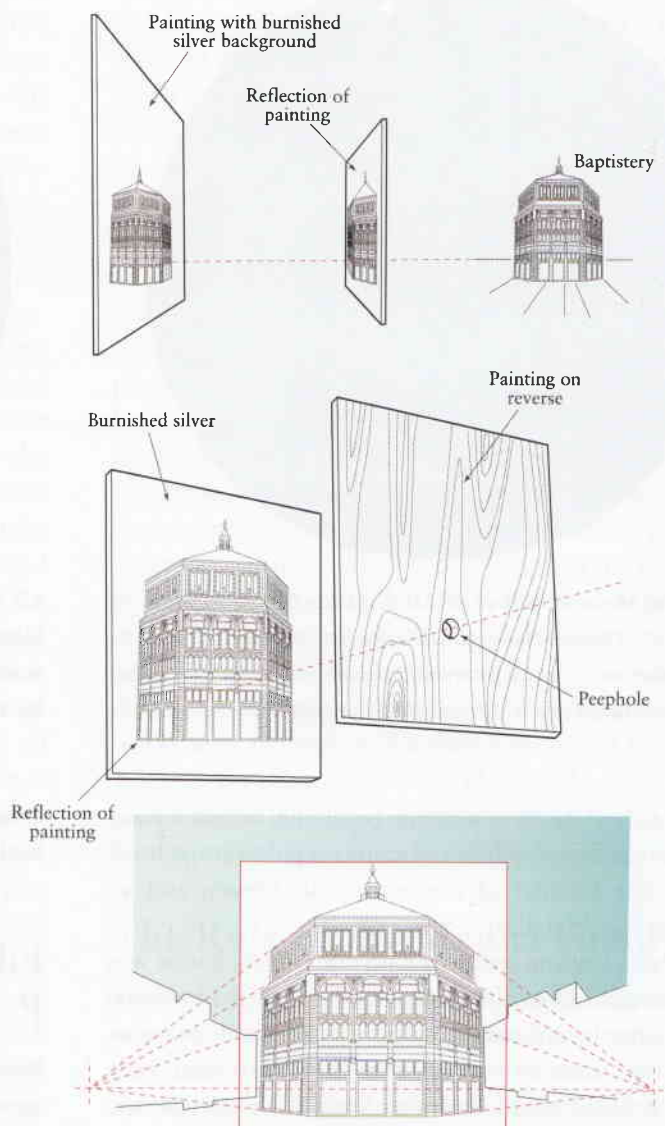
6.4. Reconstruction and diagram of Brunelleschi's perspective demonstration. Model made by Virgil Duemler, "painting" by Lew Minter, and burnished silver panels by Francis Nowalk and Frank Mance; thanks also to Marco del Bufalo.

figure or some other indication of scale, the measurements of its components. The utility of such a scheme to an architect is obvious, and its usefulness to painters and to sculptors working in relief was incalculable. Manetti tells us that Brunelleschi executed two now lost paintings to demonstrate the verisimilitude that perspective made possible. One of these represented the Baptistery of Florence and surrounding buildings as seen from just inside the cathedral door in a view similar to figure 2.33; figure 6.4 is a conjectural reconstruction of Brunelleschi's device and painting with diagrams to demonstrate his ideas. The sky was rendered in burnished silver to reflect the real sky and thus complete the sense of reality. While the illusionism of the painting itself seems to have been impressive,

Brunelleschi also devised a viewing method that controlled the observer's experience. Holding the work by a handle and looking through a peephole in the back of the painting, the observer would view the image reflected in a mirror of burnished silver that was held a cubit (the distance from the elbow to the end of the middle finger, approximately 18 inches) in front of the painted surface. By forcing the observer to view the painting in the mirror, Brunelleschi was guaranteeing that the observer's eye was exactly opposite the vanishing point, a control related to the technique of making measured architectural drawings, for which the observer's position in space was a prime determinant. In addition, the peephole forced the viewer to use monocular rather than binocular vision. The device of
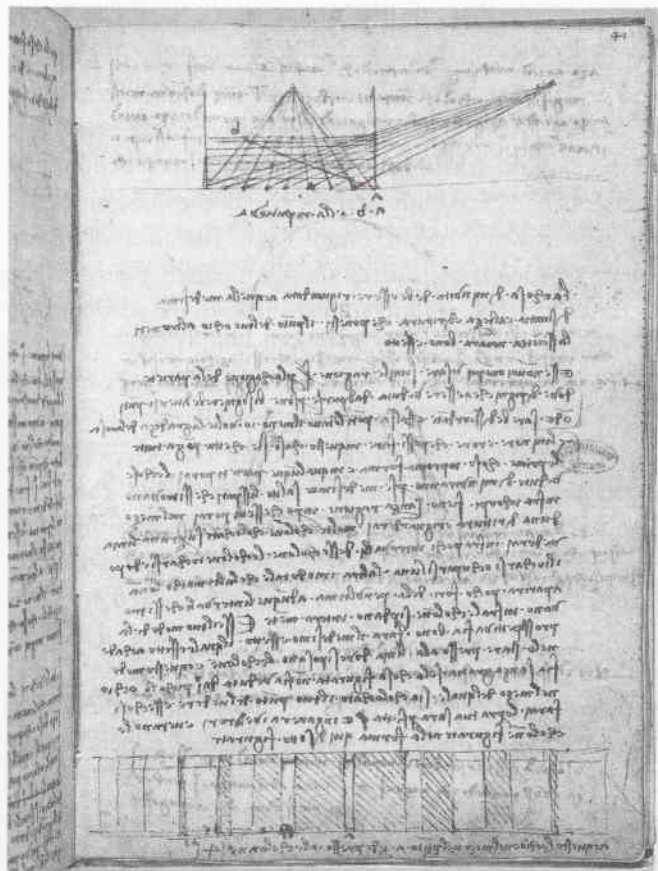
6.5. LEONARDO DA VINCI. Perspective diagram from manuscript A. c. 1490–92. Ink on paper, 8⅜ × 5¾" (21.3 × 14.8 cm). Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris: Manuscript no. 21721, p. 41.

the mirror also meant that the observer could see only the illusion; the reality that surrounds a painting and reduces its illusionistic effect was concealed. The painting was intended to be viewed from a specific location inside the cathedral doors so the observer could lower the mirror and check that the painted illusion was accurate.

Whereas this first painting offered a frontal view of the baptistery's octagonal structure with the main façade parallel to the pictorial surface, in his second demonstration painting Brunelleschi represented the Palazzo dei Priori from an angle that would bring out the mass of the structure, from a viewpoint similar to that seen in figure 2.40. Once again Brunelleschi found a way to have a naturalistic sky: in this panel, the area above the architectural structures was cut away so that the real sky, with its clouds and changing light patterns, was visible behind the painted illusion. Exactly when Brunelleschi created these works is unknown, but the first works that show the influence of linear perspective date from the late 1410s or early 1420s.

Figure 6.5 demonstrates how a painter, in this case Leonardo da Vinci, created a small drawing of an illusionistic space (for a more developed example by Leonardo, see fig. 16.17). Linear perspective is based on the assumption that parallel lines receding from us seem to converge at a point on the horizon, as seen in Leonardo's sketch. These lines are orthogonals and the point where they meet is the vanishing point. The lines parallel to the pictorial surface are transversals; Alberti describes how they are derived in his treatise on painting (see pp. 248–49). Alberti suggests that the artist establish the height of a human being in the foreground before dividing the base line into units corresponding to one-third of this height. This use of the human figure then allowed the artist to create figures of appropriate scale throughout the illusionistic space.

A print from a treatise by the sixteenth-century architect Giacomo da Vignola (fig. 6.6) shows how the observer's viewpoint is crucial for understanding why an object is depicted as it is within the artist's illusion. If the viewer were to stand on a ladder, for example, or to kneel, the geometrical form would look different. It is interesting that Vignola's demonstration shows how to represent an octagon; Brunelleschi's painting of the Florentine Baptistery or a description of that work may have influenced him.
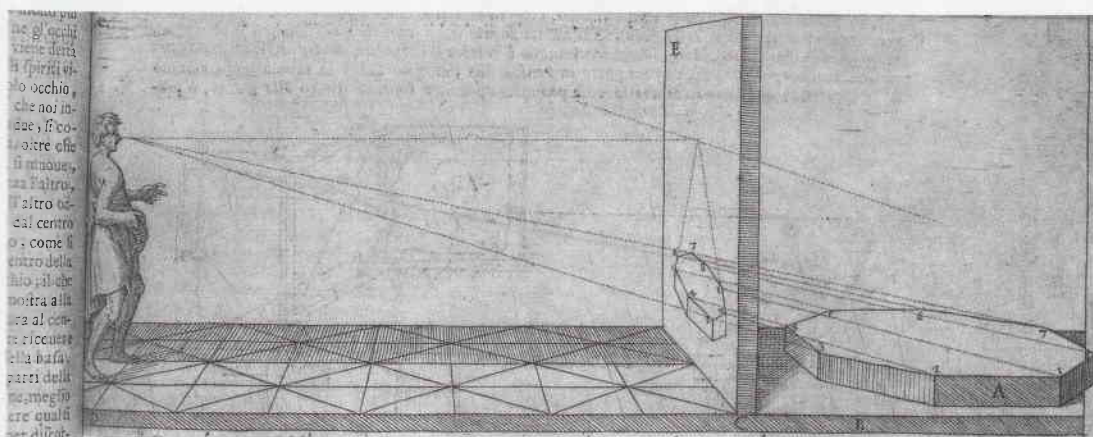


6.6. GIACOMO DA VIGNOLA. Perspective diagram from his *Le Due Regole della Prospetiva Practica* (Bologna, 1583).

## The Dome of Florence Cathedral

Brunelleschi's dome for the cathedral still dominates the city of Florence and the surrounding Arno Valley (fig 6.7; see also figs. 1.7–1.8). We do not know exactly when Brunelleschi designed the dome, but we do know that his father had served on the Duomo committee of 1367 and therefore the son must have been brought up with the model that was designed at that time (see p. 69). Both Brunelleschi and Ghiberti were part of a 1404 committee that required the architect Giovanni d'Ambrogio to lower his projected semidomes to their present level. Vasari wrote that in 1407 Brunelleschi advised the agency in charge of the cathedral—the Opera del Duomo—to "lift the weight off the shoulders of the semidomes," urging them to insert a drum between the central dome and the surrounding semidomes. In 1410, the Opera authorized such a drum and a surviving wooden model seems to represent this stage. In 1417, the Opera hired Brunelleschi as an adviser, and three years later his masonry model of the dome was accepted.

We must recognize the difficulties Brunelleschi faced, for the cathedral's basic plan, begun by Arnolfo di Cambio and enlarged in the Trecento by his successors, could not be changed (see fig. 2.39). The decorative Gothic surfacing of the exterior was largely complete; the nave, choir, and transepts had been built, and the size of the octagonal base for the crowning dome established. The idea of round windows (oculi) instead of Gothic pointed ones for the clerestory had been adopted in 1367, and the construction of this area was apparently completed by 1390.

The harmony, clarity, and simplicity that is characteristic of Brunelleschi's architectural sensibilities is evident in the surface decoration he designed for the exterior of the clerestory of the cathedral and the drum below the dome (see figs. 1.8, 6.7), in which the oculi seem superimposed over rows of rectangular panels. Rectangles and circles are elements of architectural draftsmanship created with the compass and square. Brunelleschi's architecture has been called "paper architecture," and to some degree it does preserve in stone the process of laying out architectural shapes on paper. Indeed, these rectangular panels convey



6.7. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Dome, Cathedral, Florence. 1420–36; cathedral consecrated March 25, 1436; lantern completed 1436–71; exterior decoration of lower drum completed 1452–59. Dome commissioned by the Arte della Lana and the Opera del Duomo. Construction materials include *pietra forte* (local limestone) and brick; decorative materials include white marble from Carrara, dark green marble from Prato, and pink marble. Every will drawn up in Florence had to include a donation to the construction of the cathedral.

the principles and message behind Brunelleschi's architecture, with its simplicity and order, clear-cut proportions, and carefully balanced relationships.

The dome with which Brunelleschi completed the Florentine Cathedral is more difficult to relate to Renaissance ideals, since its shape suggests an inherent tension that relates it more to a Gothic vault than to the hemispherical shape of the dome of the Pantheon (see fig. 1.2), which Brunelleschi had studied in Rome. The construction of the dome, begun in 1420, was completed in 1436, with a temporary octagonal oculus at the summit until the lantern could be built. Despite the difficulty of conceiving and constructing an enormous dome for a building designed by others, Brunelleschi managed to impose mathematical order on the construction, for the dome as completed is exactly half as wide as it is tall: 72 Florentine *braccia* wide (approximately 138 feet or 42 meters) by 144 *braccia* tall (276 feet or 84 meters). Such measurements are crucial for understanding Brunelleschi's approach to architecture, even if they are not immediately apparent when we look at this particular monument.

In contrast to the dome, its lantern and the four semicylindrical exedrae that function as buttresses (figs. 6.8–6.9) are executed in a different style, without any reference to Gothicism. The exedrae are based on circular Roman temples that Brunelleschi had seen in and near Rome, but at the Duomo the columns are paired—a favorite Brunelleschian motif—and alternate with shell-headed niches. The beautiful proportional relationships of capital to shaft, base, and entablature reveal Brunelleschi's subtle understanding of ancient architectural membering, undoubtedly based on the drawings he had made in Rome.

The lantern, which brings the shapes and forces of the building to a climax, abounds in variations on classical vocabulary. The eight ribs of the dome culminate in eight buttresses, each surmounted by a volute. Each angle is decorated with a Corinthian pilaster, while the window arches between them rest on capitals of a design unique to Brunelleschi but based on ancient examples. Each buttress is pierced by a portal-like opening surmounted by a classicizing shell form. Brunelleschi died before the lantern was begun, and some details may be attributed to Michelozzo



6.8. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Buttress in the shape of an exedra, Cathedral, Florence. 1440s.
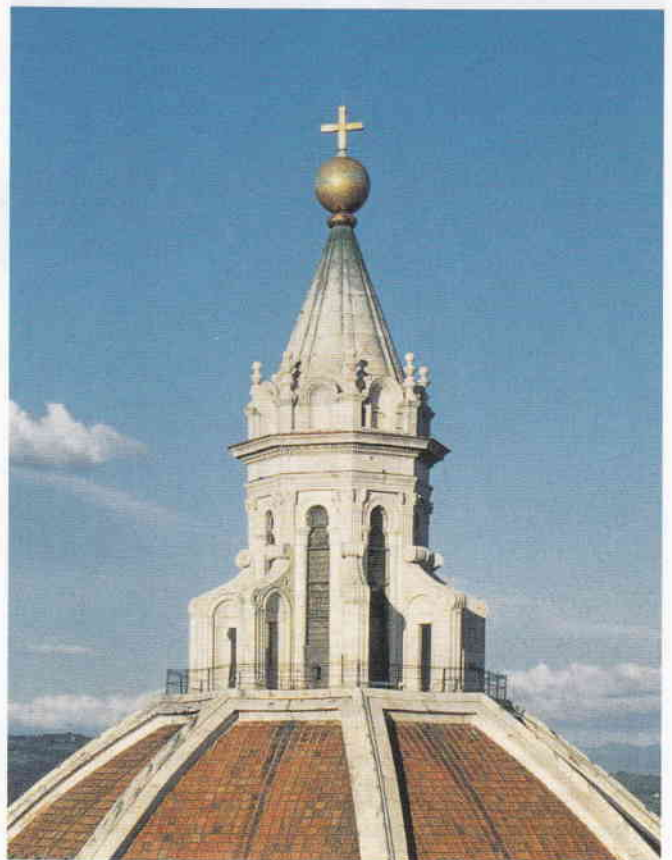


6.9. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI and MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO. Lantern, Cathedral, Florence. After 1446. White Carrara marble. The gilded copper ball, made in the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio, was raised into place, accompanied by the singing of a hymn in honor of the Virgin Mary, in May 1471.

di Bartolommeo, who finished it. The lantern culminates in a burst of delightful forms: the attic—alternating niches and balusters surmounted by balls—supports a fluted cone, a gold orb, and a cross.

No one knows how Brunelleschi intended to complete the section separating the drum and the dome, which is now a stretch of rough masonry except for the gallery on one side (fig. 6.10). Baccio d'Agnolo won a Cinquecento competition to design this gallery. After one section had been completed, Michelangelo reportedly compared Baccio's design derisively to a child's toy—the delicate miniature wooden cages in which Florentine children keep crickets—and work came to a stop. The bare masonry is perhaps preferable, for Baccio's gallery, despite its handsome classical forms, is out of scale with Brunelleschi's design (the gallery is shown as if completed in figure 1.8).
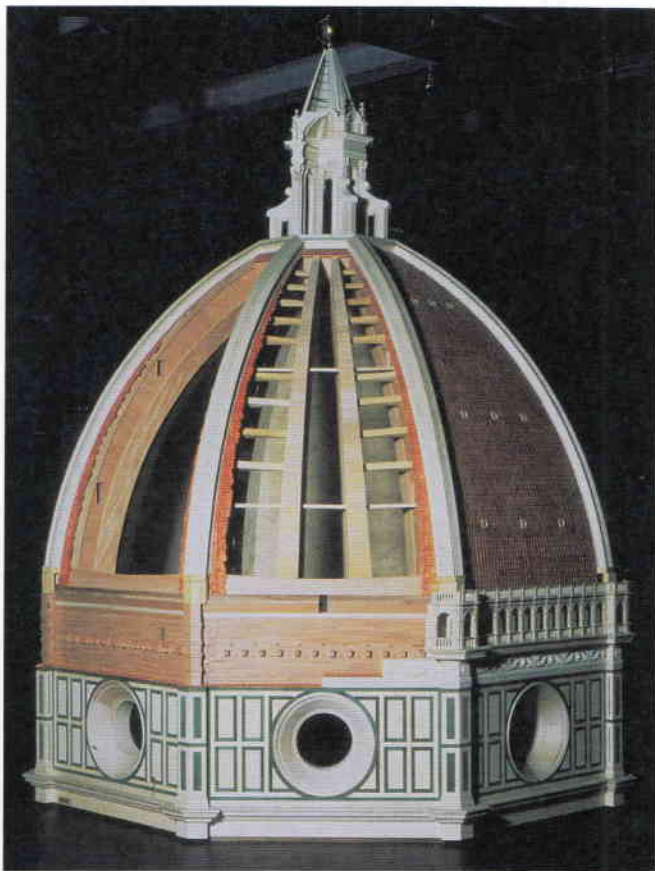


6.10. Modern cut-away model of Brunelleschi's dome, Cathedral, Florence, made in 1995 by Franco Gizdulich. The scale of the model is 1:20. Florence, Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza. Note the two hidden vertical ribs.

Writing in the sixteenth century, Francesco Bocchi stated: "In truth, knowledgeable artists cannot well decide whether this sovereign building is more beautiful or more strong, for joined together, these two things compete with each other for first place, and yet are at the same time in harmony in generating wonder and amazement."

Brunelleschi's fame among his contemporaries was based largely on his ability to solve the engineering and constructional problems the dome posed (fig. 6.11). It was the largest dome constructed since the Roman Pantheon and no higher dome had ever been built. The officials of the Opera del Duomo were especially concerned about the colossal expense of erecting the centering of timber that was the traditional means of supporting masonry during a dome's construction; the usual method involved building timber scaffolding from the ground to support the structure as it was being built. Timber centering on the scale of the Florentine dome would have used up an entire forest. But remember Alberti's praise that the dome was "constructed without the aid of centering or a great quantity of wood." Brunelleschi's scheme had the masons working from movable scaffolding supported by recently completed sections of the dome. Beams that could be lifted as the work progressed supported narrow platforms.

Brunelleschi was also noted for the "machines" he invented to facilitate construction. Traditionally, masons would have had to carry the building materials on their shoulders to great heights, but Brunelleschi invented a hoisting machine, the "Great Hoist", that was such a success that the Opera del Duomo had to publish an order forbidding Florentines from riding it for fun.

On the exterior, white marble ribs divide the dome into eight segments. These ribs, like those that articulate the cross-vaults of the traditional Gothic interior (see figs. 2.34, 2.38, 5.15), give the dome a Gothic character appropriate for a structure begun during that period. Although they are not matched by ribs on the interior surface of the dome, structurally the external ribs extend from exterior to interior (with the exception of openings for doors). They provide the basic skeletal structure that is an important part of the dome's stability, joining other vertical and horizontal elements in the dome's internal structure that are not visible to eye.

The dome was constructed using inner and outer shells, as is seen in figure 6.11. This double-shell structure made the dome lighter and provided access during construction. In addition, the space between the two shells created a protective barrier between exterior and interior; a leak in the outer fabric, for example, would drain into the opening rather than go through into the interior and possibly destabilize the structure.

Each of the eight segments between the external ribs enclosed two more vertical supporting members (here called hidden ribs), making a total of twenty-four ribs (see fig. 6.10). Within each segment, short horizontal ribs join the hidden ribs to the external ribs. These interlocked vertical and horizontal elements provide the basic structural system for the dome. The outer surface, covered with roof

Doors on various levels
that allowed access to
the stairs between inner
and outer domes.

Stone chain (total of
four).

Horizontal ribs
(total of nine).

Brick construction.

Wooden chain.

Stone masonry
construction.
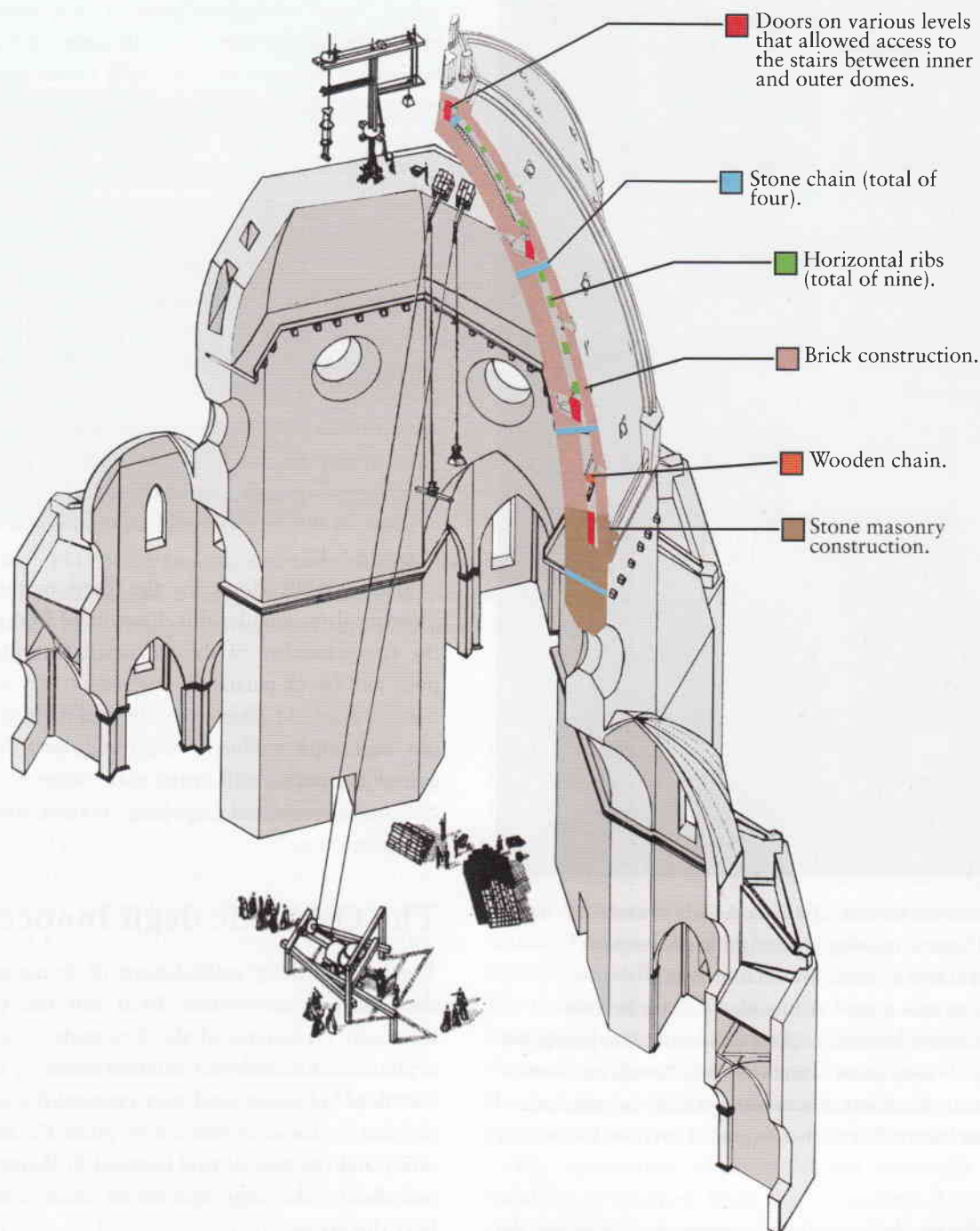
6.11. Cut-away reconstruction of the Duomo, with two examples of
Brunelleschi's "machines": the "Great Hoist" (developed 1420–21),
below, and the "Great Crane" (developed 1423), above (after
Howard Saalman, 1980).

Brunelleschi's Great Hoist can be reconstructed through drawings
by later artists and engineers. Oxen walking in circles revolved a
mechanism that, through a series of gears, turned drums to which
ropes were attached. As the ropes were wound onto the drums,
building materials were lifted into place. Since oxen cannot be made
to walk backward, Brunelleschi devised a gear that reversed the

process so that the oxen's movement could also gradually unwind the
ropes, thus allowing goods to be lowered without having to unyoke
the oxen to turn them around. Cranes (known in the documents as
*castelli*, or castles) had been used earlier in the cathedral construc-
tion. Brunelleschi developed his Great Crane in 1423, when a longer
working arm and greater flexibility in positioning was needed. After
construction materials were raised by the hoist, the crane could move
them into place on the rising dome.

The section of Brunelleschi's dome is after Giovanni Fanelli and
Michele Fanelli, 2004.

6.12. View between the inner and outer shells of Brunelleschi's dome, Cathedral, Florence, showing, on the right, the herringbone brickwork that gave it greater structural integrity.
The passage between the two shells made it possible for those building the dome to reach the height of construction. The passage has been widened at some points so that visitors to Florence can ascend in order to study the dome's construction and enjoy the panoramic view from the lantern. The climb from ground level is 463 steps.

tiles, should be thought of as a protective cover for the internal structure, while inside, the ceiling—frescoed in the sixteenth century—hides the internal structure from view. As solid parts of the dome, these surfaces may slightly increase the structure's stability but they are not a part of the construction per se.

While this would seem to complete our brief examination of this complex structure, there is yet another aspect of Brunelleschi's dome that must be recognized. A dome—like an arch and vault—exerts an outward thrust that has to be contained, usually by buttressing. In Brunelleschi's cupola, the outward thrust is in part constrained by a series of encircling "chains" hidden within the structure.

There are four stone chains and one in wood, their individual "links"—blocks of stone or great wooden timbers—held together by iron links. In figure 6.10, the narrow horizontal elements that cross the center segment indicate two of the four stone chains; the others are near the base of the dome and near the lantern. In the section (see fig. 6.11), the wooden chain is shown in red, while the four stone chains are blue.

While the lower levels of the dome were constructed in stone, the upper areas were laid in brick to lighten the weight that had to be supported (fig. 6.12). Rather than having the bricks laid in concentric circles, Brunelleschi designed a method of interrupting each row of horizontally laid bricks at certain points with a single brick laid vertically; in the next row another vertical brick was laid next to the first and so on. The resulting interlocked herringbone pattern strengthened the construction. An example of this innovative brickwork is visible on the right in figure 6.12.

Brunelleschi's dome is the predominant symbol of Florence. It was under this dome in 1439 that the heads of the two branches of the Christian Church—the Roman pope and Greek patriarch—signed a treaty intended to end the centuries-old schism that divided them (a truce that did not endure). For Florentines, the dome's meaning is suggested in a phrase still heard today when a citizen declares "Io son fiorentino di Cupolone" ("I am a Florentine from the great dome").

## The Ospedale degli Innocenti

The most striking embodiment of Brunelleschi's style in the crucial years around 1420 was the Ospedale degli Innocenti ("Hospital of the Innocents"), which provided orphans and abandoned children housing, education, and vocational training until they reached the age of eighteen (fig. 6.13). These children were given the last name Innocenti, and the role of this hospital in Florentine history is revealed by the large number of citizens today who still bear this name.

Despite the classicizing nature of the architectural elements in Brunelleschi's Ospedale, his use of arches supported on columns has no ancient precedent; in antiquity columns were used only to support flat entablatures. Brunelleschi's models for this motif, however, seem to have been two Romanesque structures in Florence that during the Renaissance were thought to be ancient: the Baptistery of Florence (see fig. 2.33) and the Church of San Miniato. While both structures incorporate ancient *spoglia* (remains of earlier structures), certain design elements betray their origins in the medieval period. Brunelleschi can be forgiven for accepting the local tradition that these were venerable

6.13. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Ospedale degli Innocenti. Begun 1419; completed mid-fifteenth century. *Pietra serena* columns and trim. Piazza della SS. Annunziata, Florence. Building commissioned by the Arte della Seta. The enameled terra-cotta medallions by Andrea della Robbia (1487) represent infants wrapped in swaddling clothes as a reference to the "Innocents" killed by the order of Herod.

buildings, but his frequent use of arches supported on columns helps to explain why his structures could never be mistaken for ancient buildings despite his careful revival of ancient architectural details.

Brunelleschi's interest in measure and proportion explains the harmony of his design. Since he was obliged to be absent from Florence during a crucial phase of the hospital's construction, Brunelleschi provided the builders with something they had never seen before: a measured scale drawing. According to Manetti, the builders had difficulty with the measurements and wished they had been provided with the customary wooden model. In the documents Brunelleschi's name eventually disappears, and a new supervisor made changes in his plan. Only the arcade of the loggia and the Corinthian pilasters that flank the terminal arches are as Brunelleschi planned them. The second-story pilasters that would have matched those on the lower level were never executed.

Nevertheless, Brunelleschi's role is apparent in the modular design that controls both plan and elevation. His system of proportions is based on the sixth-century BCE writings of Pythagoras, who had noted that when a stretched string is plucked it vibrates to produce a note, and that when the string is measured and plucked at points that correspond to exact divisions by whole numbers—such as ½, ⅓, ¼—the vibrations will produce a harmonious chord. Brunelleschi's use of a modular, mathematical system is not new; St. Augustine drew connections between

mathematics, music, and architecture, relating all three to the harmony of God's universe (see p. 155). In Brunelleschi's use of the Pythagorean scheme, the distance between the centers of the columns is equal to the distance between the center of a column and the back wall of the loggia; this means that each unit—each bay—is a perfect square. This module is the base to which others are related in the relationships of one to two, one to five, and two to five to determine the height of the loggia, the width of the principal doors, the height of the second-story windows, the width of the smaller doors and windows, the height of the architrave, the sizes of capitals and bases, the proportions of the interior rooms, and other design elements.

The appearance of Brunelleschi's rationally planned buildings is different from that of ancient Roman structures, even if these antique monuments provided many of the elements that inspired his new architecture. Characteristically, Brunelleschi preferred smooth column shafts such as those used in the Florentine Romanesque to the fluted ones usual in antique monuments, although it should be noted here that the monolithic columns of the Pantheon (see fig. 1.2) are unusual in not being fluted. He reserved fluting for pilasters, such as those that frame the outer arches of the Innocenti loggia; it should be no surprise to learn that the columns are three-fifths the height of these pilasters. The vaults of Brunelleschi's loggia are not the ribbed cross-vaults characteristic of the Gothic; he turned his back on that tradition, using domical vaults instead.

# Brunelleschi's Sacristy for San Lorenzo

The sacristy Brunelleschi designed for San Lorenzo is now usually called the Old Sacristy to distinguish it from the later, second sacristy designed by Michelangelo, which is also known as the Medici Chapel (figs. 6.14, 18.4). Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici commissioned Brunelleschi's sacristy as an addition to the old Basilica of San Lorenzo. With Giovanni's fortune supporting the work, it proceeded rapidly. When completed in 1428 or 1429, the sacristy was the first Renaissance architectural space that could actually be entered and experienced. In plan, the interior is an exact square, extended on one side by a square altar space flanked by two chambers. Fluted Corinthian pilasters, an entablature, and an arch framing the altar space articulate this side of the sacristy (fig. 6.15).

Here again Brunelleschi used modules to create a simple system of proportions: the height of the lower story to the top of the architrave equals both the distance from the architrave to the base of the dome and the distance from there to the base of the lantern (fig. 6.16). Each story, then, is related to the height of the entire building in the ratio of one to three. While this description of the building's proportions may seem academic, the end result of these unifying relationships is a structure that conveys a sense of harmony typical of Renaissance ideals.

Donatello added sculptures—bronze doors, reliefs filling the niches over the doorways, and medallions—that challenge the lightness and clarity of Brunelleschi's design. The architect apparently protested, and this is one of several occasions when artists of the Renaissance did not see eye to eye. Considering the gulf between the serenity of Brunelleschi's ideas and Donatello's interest in powerful figures and dramatic narratives, a clash between the two in terms of style is hardly surprising.

# San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito

Brunelleschi was also responsible for a revolution in the plan of church interiors and in the relationship between church buildings and the urban complexes surrounding them. He was commissioned to build two major churches in Florence—San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito—and in each case he also submitted a design for an adjacent piazza. Unfortunately he never saw either church completed, and his plans for their piazzas were not followed. Nevertheless, Brunelleschi's ideas for church interiors and his vision of harmonious urban design remained influential for centuries.

Neither church has a clear building history, but it seems that both took shape in Brunelleschi's mind at about the



A. BRUNELLESCHI'S SACRISTY

B. MICHELANGELO'S SACRISTY
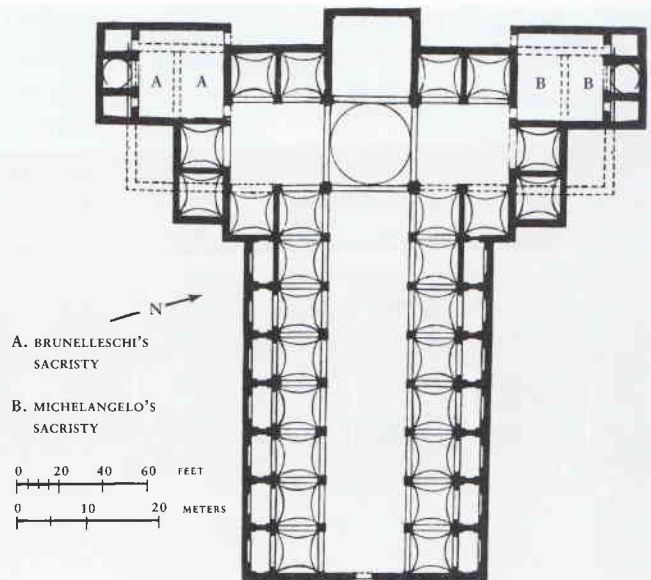
6.14. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Plan of S. Lorenzo, Florence, including First (Old) Sacristy (see figs. 6.15–6.16) and New Sacristy or Medici Chapel by Michelangelo (see figs. 18.4–18.7). Brunelleschi's work was commissioned by Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici and Cosimo de' Medici. See also figs. 18.2–18.3.



6.15. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Sacristy, S. Lorenzo, Florence. 1421–28. *Pietra serena* pilasters and trim, 38 × 38' (11.6 × 11.6 m). Commissioned by Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici. Sculpture by Donatello. After 1428–c. 1440. Sculpture probably commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici.

Florence, with its nave arcade of ancient Roman columns and capitals.

Corinthian columns of great simplicity and beauty support the nave arcades of San Lorenzo (fig. 6.17) and Santo Spirito (figs. 6.18–6.19). To achieve additional height, Brunelleschi placed impost blocks—square blocks of stone—above the Corinthian capitals (he had used these earlier in the exedrae of the cathedral; see fig. 6.8). The clerestories have round-arched windows with clear glass. Brunelleschi used the dark gray stone the Florentines call *pietra serena* for columns, capitals, and trim, while all the stucco surfaces are painted white. The result is a harmonious yet austere alternation of gray and white that emphasizes the modular relationships and interconnections between the parts of the structure. This "two-tone" system continued in use for both domestic and ecclesiastical Florentine interiors into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The side aisles have domical vaults, like the Innocenti loggia, while coffers with carved and gilded moldings and rosettes decorate the ceiling of the nave at San Lorenzo, with similar painted designs at Santo Spirito.

The modular structure at San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito is similar and, as a result, the spatial effect of the two interiors is almost identical. If we take one square side-aisle bay as the module, then each nave bay is two modules wide and the crossing is four modules square (see figs. 6.14, 6.19). The bays of the aisles are four times as tall as they are wide, and the nave is twice as tall as the aisles. The width of the nave equals the height of the nave arcade. The floor pattern at San Lorenzo emphasizes these relationships, reinforcing the modular system, but this was not carried out at Santo Spirito. The double lines of San Lorenzo's pattern also reference the width of the square column bases called plinths, establishing that the width of a single plinth is one-fifth the distance between them. The visitor is everywhere made aware of the geometric grace of the individual shapes and of their function in the harmonic, Pythagorean structure of the church.

A summary of the construction of both churches helps explain their differences. In 1418 it was decided to extend the medieval church of San Lorenzo with a new choir and transept. Construction began in 1421, but Brunelleschi was not called in until about 1425, when the foundations for the choir and transepts had already been laid. He replaced the octagonal Gothic piers of the crossing with square piers faced by Corinthian pilasters. At first, replacing the old nave was apparently not under consideration. In 1434, houses flanking the church were torn down with the idea of creating a piazza. This may have been when Brunelleschi was asked to create a plan for replacing the nave. His design did not include the many family chapels that now line the side aisles, which were added after 1470.



6.16. Plan and section of Brunelleschi's Sacristy, S. Lorenzo, Florence, demonstrating the modular scheme.

same time. San Lorenzo had the advantage of Medici patronage and consequently benefited from more expensive materials and elaborate detailing, but it was designed and erected piecemeal and its architect had to struggle with pre-existing buildings, including his own sacristy. At Santo Spirito, on the other hand, Brunelleschi could plan an entirely new structure. In designing both churches he ignored the complex vaulting systems and compound piers of late medieval architecture. It seems that he wanted to return to the simple, three-aisled plan of Early Christian basilicas in Rome, which he probably thought was exemplified in the Romanesque church of Santi Apostoli in

A gift of 40,000 florins from Cosimo funded the building of the church, in exchange for an agreement that he could be buried in front of the high altar and that the Medici arms would be the only arms to appear in the transept or choir. Later, Cosimo's grandson Lorenzo il Magnifico would write in his *Ricordi* (diary) that between 1434, the year Cosimo returned from exile, and 1471, seven years after Cosimo's death, the Medici family had spent the enormous sum of 663,755 gold florins on alms, taxes, and public buildings.



6.18. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Nave and choir, Sto. Spirito, Florence. Model submitted 1434–36(?); construction 1446 to late fifteenth century. *Pietra serena* columns and trim. The tabernacle over the main altar is a later addition not planned by Brunelleschi.
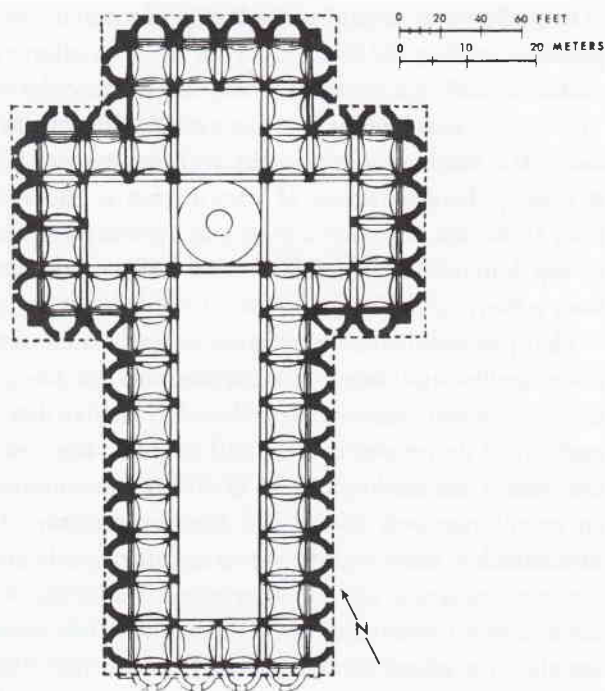
6.19. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Plan of Sto. Spirito, Florence, as originally intended; dotted lines indicate present exterior walls.

At the same time, Brunelleschi was asked to design a grandiose church at Santo Spirito to replace a small thirteenth-century structure. Lateral chapels were planned from the beginning and Brunelleschi's design, probably dated to 1434–36, had semicircular chapels around the perimeter and even across the façade. He intended that the apsidal shape of these chapels be visible on the exterior, establishing a play of curved forms against flat upper walls and geometric roof lines that would give an effect of sculptural richness. There could scarcely have been a stronger departure from the "paper architecture" of his early work. Unfortunately, flat exterior walls now fill the areas between the chapels, and the four units on the building's façade were never built.

Compared with the flatness and lightness of San Lorenzo, the interior of Santo Spirito produces an impression of mass and majesty. Half columns separate chapels that are smooth and unbroken except for a long, arched window. This is only one example of an alternation between massive, convex gray forms and elusive, concave white ones that we experience throughout the structure. Brunelleschi's original plan called for changing the orientation of the new church so that it would face the Arno across a wide piazza, but the citizens responsible for carrying out the construction from public funds did not accept this bold stroke of urban planning.

San Lorenzo did not enjoy a state subsidy, and only in 1442 did Cosimo de' Medici agree to finance the continu-

ation of the long-delayed building. Brunelleschi was destined to see his great architectural vistas only in imagination; when he died in February 1446, not one column for either of his basilicas had been quarried. Under the supervision of Michelozzo di Bartolommeo, work dragged on at San Lorenzo (with some errors of judgment) until after 1470; at Santo Spirito it extended even longer, and under a number of architects. We have no idea how Brunelleschi intended either façade to appear. Today Santo Spirito has a simple plastered façade, while that of San Lorenzo, in spite of Michelangelo's dream of completing it (see fig. 18.3), remains a wall of unfinished masonry.

## Santa Maria degli Angeli

A little building that shows a new direction in Brunelleschi's work is the chapel of the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the Florentine seat of the Camaldolite Order (see p. 145), whose prior was the celebrated humanist Ambrogio Traversari. The foundations were begun in 1434, but the current structure dates almost entirely from 1937. Only the ground plan and early drawings (fig. 6.20)



6.20. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Plan of Sta. Maria degli Angeli, Florence. Anonymous drawing after Brunelleschi's design.
Construction begun 1434; left incomplete until the 1930s.
Commissioned by the Arte di Calimala, executor for the heirs of Pippo Spano (see p. 274).

give any hint of how Brunelleschi's building might have looked. Intended for a community of about forty monks, it would have had little space for public worship. The octagonal plan called for chapels on seven of the eight sides and a dome over the central area. The oval chapels extending around a central domed area would have continued the interest in bold massing Brunelleschi first demonstrated at Santo Spirito, while on the exterior niches would have created a similar effect. Even more importantly, in this project we witness the first step in the direction of the central plan, which was to reach its culmination in the High Renaissance projects for a new St. Peter's in Rome (see figs. 17.11–17.15, 20.9–20.11).

## The Pazzi Chapel

The powerful Pazzi family commissioned Brunelleschi's Chapter House, which is also known as the Pazzi Chapel, for the monastery of Santa Croce. Although the structure may have been designed about 1423–24, construction did not start until 1442. The unfinished façade is only partially based on Brunelleschi's design and is not illustrated here. The plan and interior (figs. 6.1, 6.21) represent an amplification and consolidation of the principles demonstrated in the San Lorenzo Sacristy; like the latter, the Pazzi Chapel is composed of two stories supporting a dome. Here the resemblance ceases. The central square is extended on either side by half a square, probably because the Franciscan chapter of Santa Croce required a large meeting space. As a result, the building is twice as wide as it is deep. The center is roofed by a twelve-ribbed dome, the sides by barrel vaults. The walls are articulated by Corinthian pilasters. Every lower element has a continuation above.
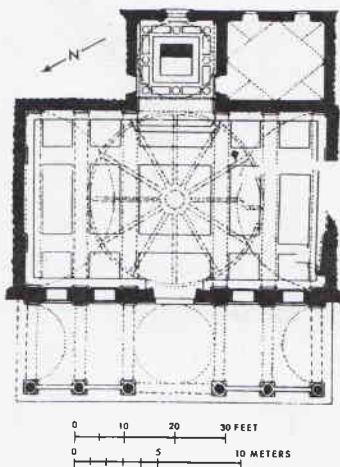


6.21. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. Plan of Pazzi Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence (see figs. 2.37, 6.1).

Brunelleschi's module is clearly indicated by the pilasters, so that the space between the two pilasters on each side wall (not illustrated here) is two modules wide. The square altar area is likewise two modules wide and deep. The height of the pilasters with the cornice is four modules. The consistency of part to part is clearer here than at the San Lorenzo Sacristy and like the main church at San Lorenzo, the modular system is diagramed in the floor pattern.

The proportions of the three stories—architectural order, arches, and dome—are not identical, as they are in the San Lorenzo Sacristy. Here they diminish as they rise, each story decreasing by one half-module. The result is that the Corinthian pilasters dominate the interior to an extent not seen in the San Lorenzo Sacristy. As in Brunelleschi's other works, the decorative details are set out in *pietra serena* against white stucco walls, vaults, and dome. Color is provided by the stained-glass window over the altar, the glazed terra-cotta reliefs in the medallions—particularly the sky blue of their backgrounds—and the Pazzi coats of arms in the pendentives.

At this point, one might bear in mind the admonition of the contemporary Florentine humanist Giannozzo Manetti, who stated in his book *On the Dignity and Excellency of Man* that the truths of the Christian religion are as clear and self-evident as the axioms of mathematics. The rational, ordered clarity of Brunelleschi's religious buildings may disappoint those who, like the critic John Ruskin, think that the soaring Gothic is the most appropriate style for a Christian church. Yet, when understood in their context, Brunelleschi's churches are religious structures of the highest order. The Florentine humanists thought that geometric principles could unlock mysteries at the heart of the universe and reveal the intentions of a God who was eminently understandable and had created the universe for human enjoyment.

## The Medici Palace and Michelozzi di Bartolommeo

According to Vasari and other sources, Brunelleschi submitted a model for a new house to Cosimo de' Medici. It has been suggested that this house would have been situated on the Piazza San Lorenzo, its portal opposite that of the church, and that the two buildings would have faced each other across the large square. Vasari reported that Cosimo rejected Brunelleschi's proposal as too sumptuous and that Brunelleschi responded by smashing the model. The story suggests that Cosimo did not wish his residence to be so splendid that it would make him appear what he in fact was—the ruler of Florence. Cosimo had been exiled

in 1433–34, but by 1446, when the palace was begun, he had reinforced his power by political maneuvers. Although the machinery of the republic remained superficially intact, it was controlled by him.

The designation of the Medici house as a palace does not indicate any special status. *"Palazzo"* is used to refer to any large building; even the modest town houses of some Florentine merchants are called *palazzi*. But the dimensions of the Medici Palace (figs. 6.22–6.26) are by no means modest. Each story is more than 20 feet (6.1 meters) high, and the entire structure, to the top of the cornice, rises more than 70 feet (21 meters) above the street.

It is presumed that Cosimo's architect was Michelozzo di Bartolommeo (1396–1472), but at least one scholar has reattributed the work to Brunelleschi because of its originality; the exceptional nature of the palace makes it difficult to identify the architect.

After the Riccardi family bought it in the mid-seventeenth century, the palace was extended and its original proportions transformed; figures 6.22–6.23 suggests the cubic nature of the original. We must also imagine the building without Michelangelo's pedimented windows on the ground floor, shown in the print and still in place today, which were added in the sixteenth century to provide the family with greater security. In the more informal atmosphere of the Quattrocento, these arches had been open, although they could be closed by large wooden doors. To modern eyes, perhaps the most striking aspect of the Medici Palace is its fortresslike appearance, created by the rough-cut stones of the ground floor; the rustication of these blocks is imitated from that of such ancient Roman monuments as the Forum of Augustus in Rome, which in the Renaissance was believed to have been the Palace of Caesar. Even in turbulent fifteenth-century Florence, such rustication can have had no defensive nature; it may simply have been intended to convey to the Florentine passerby the Tuscan dignity and antique fortitude of the House of Medici.

The interior has been modified, but the lucidity of the general outlines of the plan and the regularity of the palace's basic shape were new to Florentine palace architecture and may have been inspired by the description of ancient Roman houses given by Vitruvius, the first-century BCE architect and theorist. Later plans of the ground floor and *piano nobile* (figs. 6.24–6.25) reveal the original placement of some important family rooms, including the chapel (see fig. 12.1) and the study ("scrittoio"). Note the symmetrical placement of the two rooms flanking the main entrance on the ground floor. On the *piano nobile*, the largest room, the *sala*, was used as a reception hall or for dining or dancing. It has a prime corner position looking south toward the Duomo, and its dimensions were
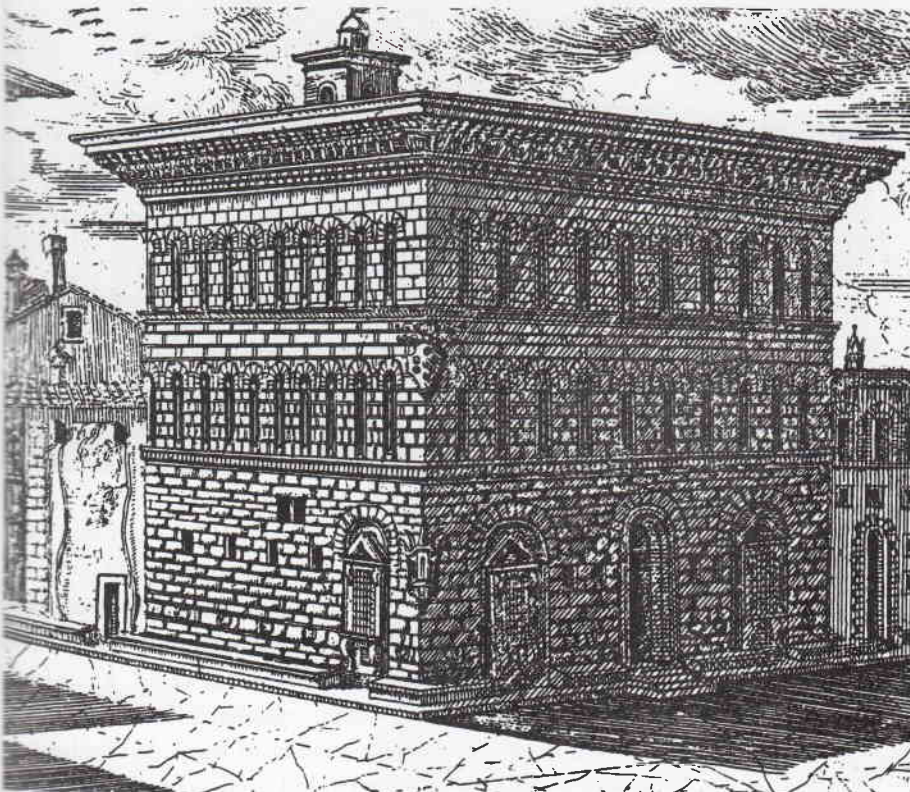


6.22. MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO (attributed to). Palazzo Medici (now known as the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi), Florence, as seen in a print of 1684 from Ferdinando del Migliore's *Firenze, città nobilissima illustrata*. Begun 1446. Commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici. Ground floor pedimented windows by Michelangelo (c. 1517), commissioned by Pope Leo X.

A diplomat from Milan wrote in 1459 that the palace was "embellished on every side with gold and fine marbles, with carvings and sculptures in relief, with pictures and inlays done in perspective, by the most accomplished and perfect masters."

6.23. MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO (attributed to). Palazzo Medici, Florence. Begun 1446.

grand—about 65½ × 34½ feet, with ceilings about 21 feet high (20 × 10.5 meters, 6.5 meters high). One could go directly from the *sala* into a bedroom (*camera*), and then proceed into the narrow passage that led into the chapel.

An inventory made after the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492 shows that the palace housed a treas-ury of Quattrocento painting, sculpture, and decorative arts, as well as a collection of ancient coins and gems (see figs. 9.15, 10.28, 11.5–11.7, 12.1–12.5, 12.24, 13.2–13.4, 13.15). We know from documents that a bedroom on the ground floor (the *camera terrena* in fig. 6.24) had inlaid wooden wainscoting with Paolo Uccello's battle scenes (see
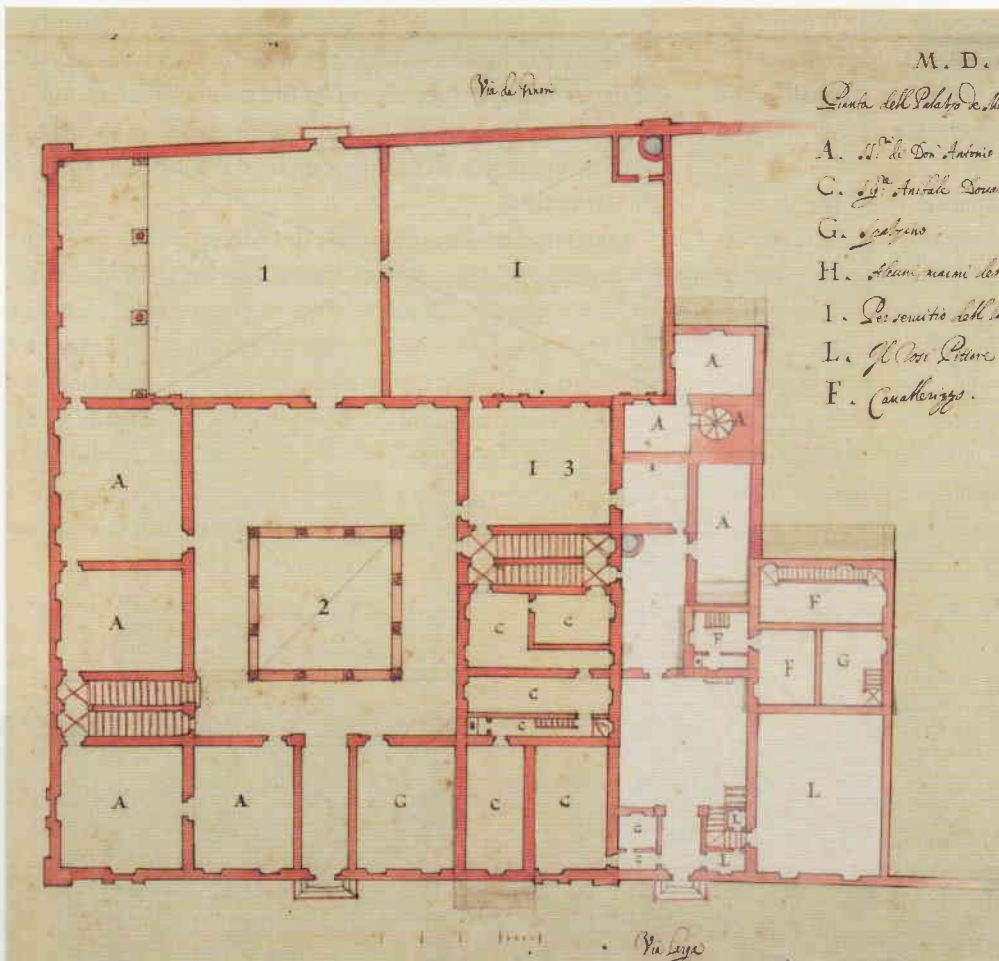
6.24. MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO (attributed to). Plan of the ground floor of the Palazzo Medici, Florence. This plan was made in 1650, after the Medici had sold the palace to the Riccardi family. The areas to the right have been lightened because they are later additions and not part of the Quattrocento palazzo. Archivio di Stato, Florence, Guardaroba Medicea, filza 1016.

1 Garden.
2 Courtyard.
3 *Camera terrena*.
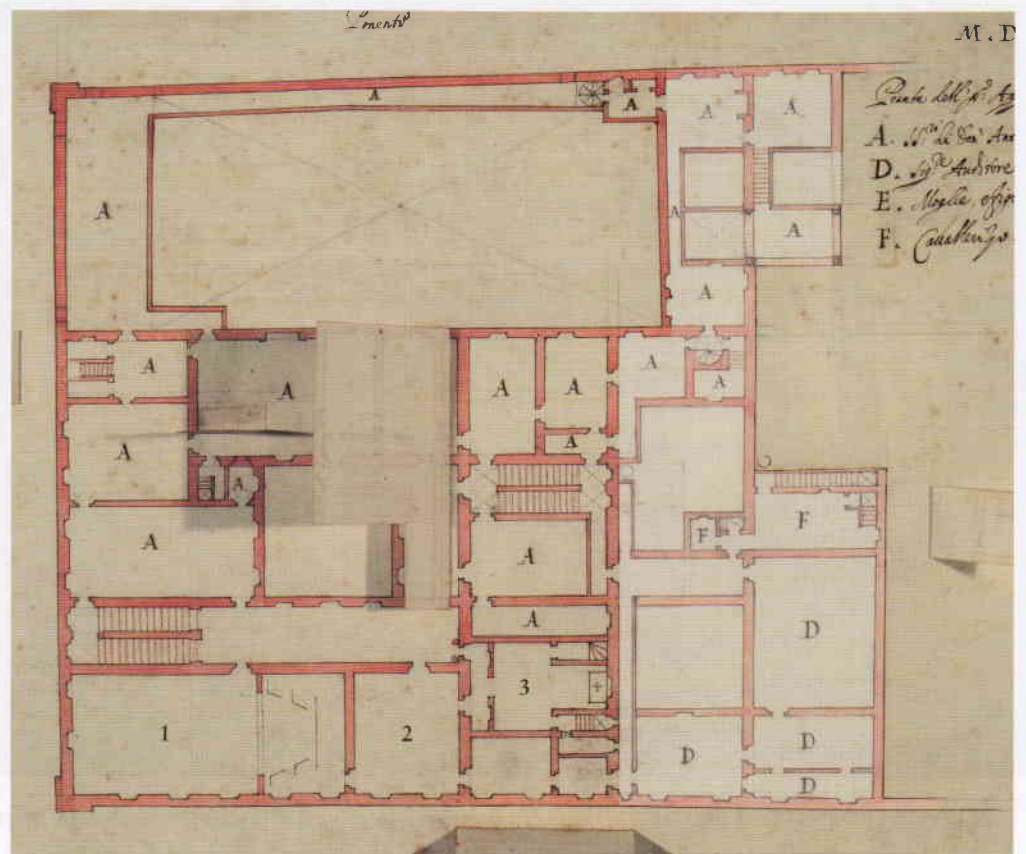


6.25. MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO (attributed to). Plan of the *piano nobile* of the Palazzo Medici, Florence.

1 *Sala*.
2 *Camera*.
3 Chapel.

figs. 11.5–11.6) displayed above, and that Piero de' Medici's *scrittoio* on the *piano nobile* had an enameled terra-cotta ceiling with Luca della Robbia's roundels representing the Labors of the Months (today at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London).

On the exterior, stringcourses separate the three stories, and the progressive diminution in height from the lower to the upper story is accompanied by correspondingly smoother surface treatments. The rustication of the ground story is replaced on the second by trimmed blocks with deep joints, while the joints between blocks on the third story are almost invisible. The windows of the upper stories are mullioned (divided by a colonette), as is characteristic of Florentine Quattrocento palaces. The Corinthian colonnettes that support the round arches of these windows are derived from Gothic structures such as the Palazzo dei Priori (see fig. 2.40). Medici arms and symbols decorate the lunettes above the windows and a large coat of arms at the corner identifies the owners. The motifs of the cornice are imitated from Roman models, their large scale providing a definitive cap to the blocklike form of the structure.

Like large medieval palaces, the Medici Palace was built around a central courtyard (fig. 6.26); the example at the Medici Palace is distinguished by its square plan and regular design. The lower story is a continuous arcade, the second has windows resembling those of the exterior, and the third was originally an open loggia. The arcade of the ground story resembles those of Brunelleschi's buildings, but here the proportions are heavier, as is appropriate for columns that functionally and visually support an enclosed second story.



6.26. MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO (attributed to). Courtyard with *sgraffito* decoration, Palazzo Medici, Florence. Donatello's bronze *David* (see fig. 10.22) was first documented as being placed in the center of the courtyard.

6.27. MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO. Library, Monastery of S. Marco, Florence. 1442–44. *Pietra serena* columns and trim. Commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici.

Although Michelozzo has not been securely identified as the architect of Cosimo's palace, we know a number of his other works, both architectural and sculptural. One of his most elegant creations is the library of the monastery of Sán Marco (fig. 6.27; for the plan, see fig. 9.6), part of an extensive rebuilding project supervised by Michelozzo and financed by Cosimo de' Medici after 1436. The library is composed of three aisles of equal height, the outer ones groin-vaulted, the central one roofed by a barrel vault and supported on an airy arcade of delicate Ionic columns; such a combination of arcade and vaults has no known precedent. The effect of perspective recession, which is enhanced when the library is viewed in photographs, is so strong that one wonders whether contemporary painted demonstrations of Brunelleschi's perspective scheme might have been a part of Michelozzo's inspiration. The long, narrow design with windows on both sides maximizes the natural light (which would have been more important to the monks who worked in this space reading, writing, and copying manuscripts) than any of the architectural refinements we admire in the structure today. The natural light combined with the slenderness of the columns creates an effect that reappears in the architectural settings of paintings by Fra Angelico (see fig. 9.7), who lived and worked there. Donations from Cosimo de' Medici enriched the library's collection of manuscripts. Since books could be circulated for a period of six months to applicants approved by the trustees, the library at San Marco can be recognized as the first public library since antiquity.

# TRANSITIONS IN TUSCAN SCULPTURE

In its use and transformation of classical elements and the application of a mathematical proportion system to create new effects of harmony and balance, architecture is the area in which the new principles of the Renaissance are most clearly evident. At the same time, sculptors were creating a remarkable group of works that express the new concepts of individual dignity and autonomy.

## The Competition Panels

Among the most ambitious sculptural projects of the Early Renaissance was the continuation of the series of doors for the Florentine Baptistery, one pair of which, showing the life of John the Baptist, had been made by Andrea Pisano in the 1330s (see fig. 3.33). Two more sets, intended to illustrate the Old and New Testaments, were needed to decorate the other two portals of the building. In 1401, the Opera of the Baptistery announced a competition for the second set of doors, to be held under the supervision of the Arte di Calimala, the refiners of imported woolen cloth and the oldest of the Florentine guilds. The seven sculptors who are reported to have competed were all Tuscans, including the Sienese artist Jacopo della Quercia (c. 1380–1438), Filippo Brunelleschi, and Lorenzo Ghiberti (1381?–1455). Ghiberti, the eventual victor, was scarcely more than twenty years old at the time and was working as a painter.

The subject selected for competition was the Old Testament story of how God tested the faith of Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, who had been born to Abraham and his wife Sarah in their extreme old age (Genesis 22:1–12). Abraham, accompanied by two servants and a donkey, took Isaac into the wilderness, but just as he held the knife to his son's throat, God sent an angel to tell him that the Lord was pleased by his faith and would be satisfied with the offering of a ram caught in a nearby thicket. The story was interpreted as foreshadowing the sacrifice of Christ, but the Opera may have had a more immediate reason for selecting it. The climax of the story emphasizes divine intervention, and we must remember that the Florentines were facing a series of threats from outside forces (see pp. 159–60).

The two preserved competition panels (figs. 7.2–7.3), by Brunelleschi and Ghiberti, represent the same moment in the story: the angel intervenes as Isaac kneels on the altar, his father about to put a knife to his throat. The two servants, the ram caught in the thicket, and the donkey drinking from a stream are represented in both panels. Perhaps the inclusion of these elements was required by the competition.

Brunelleschi's relief is an original creation, full of action-filled poses. Abraham twists Isaac's head to expose his neck, while the angel has to rush in and physically restrain Abraham to prevent the sacrifice. This interpretation is profoundly human. Abraham's brutal treatment of Isaac

*Opposite:* 7.1. Orsanmichele, Florence, photograph of the southeast corner with guild patron saints and tabernacles, including replicas of Nanni di Banco's *Four Crowned Martyrs* (third niche from left, fig. 7.15), Donatello's *St. George* (fourth from left, figs. 7.13–7.14). Rebuilt 1337; arches closed, later fourteenth century; niches and sculptures, fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. *Pietra forte*. The sculptures from Orsanmichele are in the process of being removed for restoration; some restored examples have been placed in the upper story of Orsanmichele but this space is seldom open to visitors. (For a view of the shrine in the interior, see figs. 5.4–5.6.)

7.2. FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI. *Sacrifice of Isaac.* 1402–3. Bronze with gilding, 21 × 17½" (53 × 44 cm) inside molding. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Competition panel for the second set of bronze doors for the Florentine Baptistery, sponsored by the Opera of the Baptistery and the Arte di Calimala.



7.3. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *Sacrifice of Isaac.* 1402–3. Bronze with gilding, 21 × 17½" (53 × 44 cm) inside molding. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Competition panel for the second set of bronze doors for the Florentine Baptistery, sponsored by the Opera of the Baptistery and the Arte di Calimala.

suggests that he has had to suppress the knowledge that he is about to sacrifice his only child. The body of the boy is scrawny, the poses of the two main figures tense, and the drapery rhythms sharp and broken. All are rendered in a new, profoundly naturalistic style. Interestingly, the harmony and balance that we studied in Brunelleschi's architecture are absent from this dramatic interpretation.

The young Ghiberti, who was trained as a painter but had not yet matriculated in any guild, displays extraordinary accomplishment in handling bronze. In his interpretation the boy looks upward for deliverance from death. Abraham, his arm embracing the boy, is poised with his knife pointed toward but not touching his son. The foreshortened angel stops the sacrifice with a gesture. The ram rests quietly before his thicket, while the servants converse gently. There is none of the physical contact and psychological strain of Brunelleschi's relief, and his jagged movements are replaced in Ghiberti's work by poses as graceful as those of dancers. Throughout Ghiberti's composition—in every figure and drapery fold and even in the rocks—curving rhythms create an effect of continuous melody.

Ghiberti's flowing lines draw our attention to the body of Isaac. While Brunelleschi has analyzed the human body with unprecedented naturalism, his end result is ungainly,

albeit expressive. Ghiberti's figure of Isaac is the first truly ideal Renaissance nude; here naturalism and classicism are blended and sublimated by a new vision of what a human being can be. The body displays the strength and resilience of a perfectly proportioned youth, overflowing with energy yet remarkably graceful. Not since the last Roman sculptor capable of imitating a Greek or Hellenistic original had such a nude been created. Without special study of anatomy, as far as we know, Ghiberti understood how to represent the difference between bone and muscular tissue, as well as the dynamic possibilities of muscles and the softness of skin. Most natural of all, perhaps, is the expression of the boy—not only his upturned face but the spring and lightness of his pose.

Ghiberti's Isaac was certainly inspired by a study of ancient Roman nude figures, and other references to classical antiquity are evident in the reliefs. In both, the head of Abraham shows the inspiration of ancient Roman heads of Jupiter. The servant plucking a thorn from his foot in Brunelleschi's panel is based on a popular Roman sculpture, the *Spinario*, of which many ancient versions survive. The second servant is also taken from an ancient model. The relief on the front of Brunelleschi's altar seems to represent a scene of religious offering; whatever model may

have inspired Brunelleschi, the simple, even deliberately crude style suggests that he was consciously setting the event in the distant past. In Ghiberti's panel the altar is decorated with an ancient Roman *rinceau* pattern, and antique models have been found for both his servants and the ram. These two reliefs are so replete with classical quotations—yet so few surface in Ghiberti's subsequent first set of Baptistery doors—that one wonders if allusions to ancient art were another requirement for the competition.

There are significant technical differences between the reliefs. Brunelleschi's is composed of a bronze sheet to which the individually cast figures are attached, while Ghiberti's background and figures are cast in a single, continuous piece, with the exception of the figure of Isaac, which was attached. Ghiberti's relief is, therefore, stronger and, because his figures are hollow, his relief is only about two-thirds as heavy as Brunelleschi's. The judges of the competition would surely have realized that doors made following Ghiberti's technique would be both more durable and require less bronze. For the practically minded members of the Arte di Calimala, such differences may have helped make Ghiberti the obvious winner in the competition.

Ghiberti was the author of a lengthy but unfinished text titled—after a popular work by the ancient author Cicero—the *Commentaries*, written c. 1447–55. Much of the text deals with the relative merits of artists of classical antiquity whose works were known to Ghiberti from literary sources. One section discusses scientific subjects and is especially devoted to an analysis of the eye, its structure and its functions, and the relation of sight to the behavior of light. Given this study, it seems appropriate to note how Ghiberti treats the eye in his sculpture. Before his time the eye was generally modeled as a blank surface, whether or not the cornea was painted on later (as in the case of marble statues) or sculpted away so that colored inlay of ivory or glass paste could be inserted. Ghiberti makes Isaac's gaze infinitely more expressive by delicately incising the line of the cornea and dot of the pupil. In almost all of Ghiberti's sculpture, the eye is delineated in this new way, conferring a vivid individuality to human expression. This treatment underscores other new optical qualities evident in Ghiberti's sculpture. Near the beginning of the second *Commentary* he says, "Nessuna cosa si vede senza la luce" ("Nothing can be seen without light"), and in his relief gilded surfaces send light flowing across delicate textures or reflect it into shadows.

## Ghiberti to 1425

The Opera acquired the competition relief in 1403 and paid Ghiberti a sizable sum for gilding the figures and landscape. He and the members of his workshop worked on the set of doors (today known as the North Doors) until 1424. Such a lengthy commitment was required by the scale of the project and the range of complex techniques involved: modeling in wax, casting in bronze, and then chasing, gilding, and burnishing the cast bronze, all under Ghiberti's meticulous direction.

Between competition and commission, the subject for the doors was changed, and Ghiberti was confronted with illustrating the New Testament instead of the Old. His panel of Abraham was thus set aside, intended for use in the third set of doors. The second doors (fig. 7.4) were designed to match the Trecento doors of Andrea Pisano, which were organized in twenty-eight quatrefoils arranged in seven rows of four (see figs. 3.33–3.34). While Andrea's quatrefoils are framed with a relatively austere design of alternating diamonds and stylized flowers, the greater richness and naturalism of Ghiberti's borders reflects the taste of the current International Gothic. Through Ghiberti's margins flows a tide of vegetable and animal life—branches, foliage, fruit, birds, lizards, and even insects—and there is a head in a quatrefoil at each intersection. With the exception of Ghiberti's self-portrait, these heads apparently represent Old Testament prophets and prophetesses. Each is distinctive—young, old, male, female, calm, agitated—and several reveal Ghiberti's study of antique sculpture.

The lowest two rows of reliefs represent the four Evangelists and four Early Christian theologians known as Fathers of the Church. Above these begin the New Testament scenes. The first is the *Annunciation* (fig. 7.5). Ghiberti's version is related to a number of Late Gothic Annunciations in Florentine art, particularly those by Lorenzo Monaco. In these, Gabriel flies into the scene—a visionary angel with clouds streaming from his feet, his wings beating, still airborne, at the command of God the Father, who sends down the dove of the Holy Spirit. The flying angel is common in Florentine art because Gabriel is shown flying in the most important representation of this theme in the city: a modest Trecento fresco at SS. Annunziata that is considered to be miracle-working. Because the head of Gabriel in this fresco was believed to have been painted by an angel, this type of representation became the standard in Florence.

The grace and elegance of line of Ghiberti's composition is emphasized by the economy of detail. Throughout the doors, Ghiberti seems to be both attracted to the rhythms of the quatrefoil format and frustrated by its emphasis on surface patterning. He keeps Pisano's flat bronze background, while at the same time rotating the portico before which the Virgin stands to indicate depth, as if to penetrate the flatness of the plaque. The foreshortened figure of God seems to emerge through the background rather than being

7.4. LORENZO GHIBERTI. North Doors. 1403–24. Bronze with gilding, height approx. 15' (4.6 m). 🏛 Baptistery, Florence.
Commissioned by the Opera of the Baptistery and the Arte di Calimala. The outer frame, by Ghiberti, has been dated c. 1423–24.

7.5. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *Annunciation*. Before 1407. Bronze with gilding, 20½ × 17¾" (52 × 45 cm) inside molding. ☳ Panel on the North Doors, Baptistery, Florence (fig. 7.4).



7.6. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *Flagellation*. c. 1416–19. Bronze with gilding, 20½ × 17¾" (52 × 45 cm) inside molding. ☳ Panel on the North Doors, Baptistery, Florence (fig. 7.4).

placed against it as Andrea's figures were. Here Ghiberti struggles against the limitations of the frame, trying to suggest the illusion of a deeper space. The drapery forms contribute to this illusion; Gabriel's cloak envelops his body in drapery that enhances his mass, and Mary's belt-less tunic falls in flowing patterns about her limbs, revealing their fullness and grace.

A partly classical portico sets the stage for the *Flagellation* (fig. 7.6). The order in which these reliefs were made remains unclear but presumably this is among the later ones, for it seems to have been designed near the time that Brunelleschi was meditating on his new classical architecture for the Ospedale degli Innocenti and San Lorenzo (see figs. 6.13, 6.17). Or perhaps the relief precedes these buildings: a search of the backgrounds in Florentine art of the early 1400s discloses symptoms of the oncoming Renaissance. In this relief, for example, Ghiberti's Roman composite capitals demonstrate his interest in ancient Roman decorative motifs. The colonnade, however, is only a background for the interaction of the figures rather than an enclosure. Christ's supple body continues the new classical tradition Ghiberti had established in his Isaac. With twisting movements the men whipping Christ raise their now-missing weapons and carry the viewer's eye up into the rhythmic pattern of the quatrefoil. In a sketch (fig. 7.7),



7.7. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *Flagellation*. c. 1416–19(?). Pen and bister, 8⅛ × 6½" (21 × 17 cm). Albertina, Vienna.

**7.8. LORENZO GHIBERTI.** *St. John the Baptist* and inlaid marble tabernacle. 1405–17. Bronze, originally with gilded decoration, and mosaic decoration in the Gothic gable; height of figure 8'4" (2.55 m). Orsanmichele, Florence. Commissioned by the Arte di Calimala (see also fig. 7.10). Historic photograph taken before the figure was removed from its niche.

Ghiberti explored possibilities for the figures whipping Christ. That this quick compositional study should have survived from a period when drawings were not valued is amazing; it allows us a view of Ghiberti that we would not otherwise have. Working from models who were probably apprentices in his workshop, he caught their motions quickly, using overlapping strokes of the pen. He abandoned the pose at the bottom, but reworked the top one into the graceful figure in the relief.

While Ghiberti was working on the project, the same guild who commissioned the bronze doors asked him to make a bronze statue of *St. John the Baptist* (fig. 7.8) for their niche at Orsanmichele (see fig. 7.1). This structure, originally a loggia, was rebuilt by the commune in 1337 as a combined shrine, wheat market, and granary. Its enormous size may have been intended to convince citizens of the vast amounts of grain the commune kept available in case of siege or famine. (For its location at a central posi-

7.11. DONATELLO. *David*. Probably the figure documented in 1408–9 and reworked in 1416. Marble, height 6'3" (1.91 m) (including base). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. This is probably the work commissioned by the Opera del Duomo for one of the buttresses of the Duomo. Donatello's figure and a companion one by Nanni di Banco were not mounted there because the commissioners had misjudged the scale; the figures were too small for the architecture.

stands proudly yet awkwardly, with his left hand bent upward on his hip and his head tilted. His elevated chin and self-confident pose assert his awareness of his triumph. Interestingly, a large patch of marble makes up David's left elbow. Since the elbow extends further into space than the rest of the figure, this raises the intriguing possibility that the youthful Donatello may have added the patch to create a larger figure than his assigned block of marble would allow. It is also possible, of course, that he misjudged the size of his block and had to add the patch to complete the figure, or that the patch was added when the elbow was damaged.

Donatello seems to have been fascinated by textures; David's hair falls in unkempt masses that contrast with his smooth cloak and even smoother neck and cheeks. Even at this early stage in Donatello's style, however, curious sculptural effects appear; projections and hollows in the marble no longer correspond to those in the represented object. Donatello has begun to reduce contrasts in levels and to vary the marble surface to attract light and cast shadows. These tendencies toward optical suggestion—rather than description—increased in Donatello's work over time.

Donatello's earliest contribution to the niches of Orsanmichele seems to have been the marble figure of *St. Mark* (fig. 7.12) for the Arte dei Linaioli e Rigattieri, the linen weavers and peddlers. Shortly after the statue was commissioned, the guild approved a drawing submitted by two stone carvers for the elaborate inlaid marble tabernacle in which the figure was to stand. Donatello, then, neither designed nor executed the niche in which his figure would be displayed. While the contract for the tabernacle set the price at 200 florins, Donatello's contract stated that the figure would be appraised only on completion of the work, revealing that, whereas an ornamental niche could be evaluated in advance, the value of a sculpted figure could be determined only after it was completed. Since Donatello was usually paid between 90 and 100 florins for a figure like *St. Mark*, the tabernacle would have cost approximately twice as much as the figure.

A comparison between this statue and Ghiberti's *John the Baptist* (see fig. 7.8) is instructive. In Donatello's *Mark*, Gothic patterns have completely disappeared. The figure's feet seem to sink into his cushion (a product sold by the members of the guild), heightening the effect of reality, while the drapery moves naturally over torso and limbs. Donatello seems to have been demonstrating how cloth— the product of the patron guild—behaves. One wonders why the Florentines, whose fortunes were largely founded on the manufacture, processing, and sale of cloth, had not paid more attention to its properties before instead of being seduced by the abstract formulas of the Byzantine, Giottesque, or Gothic styles.
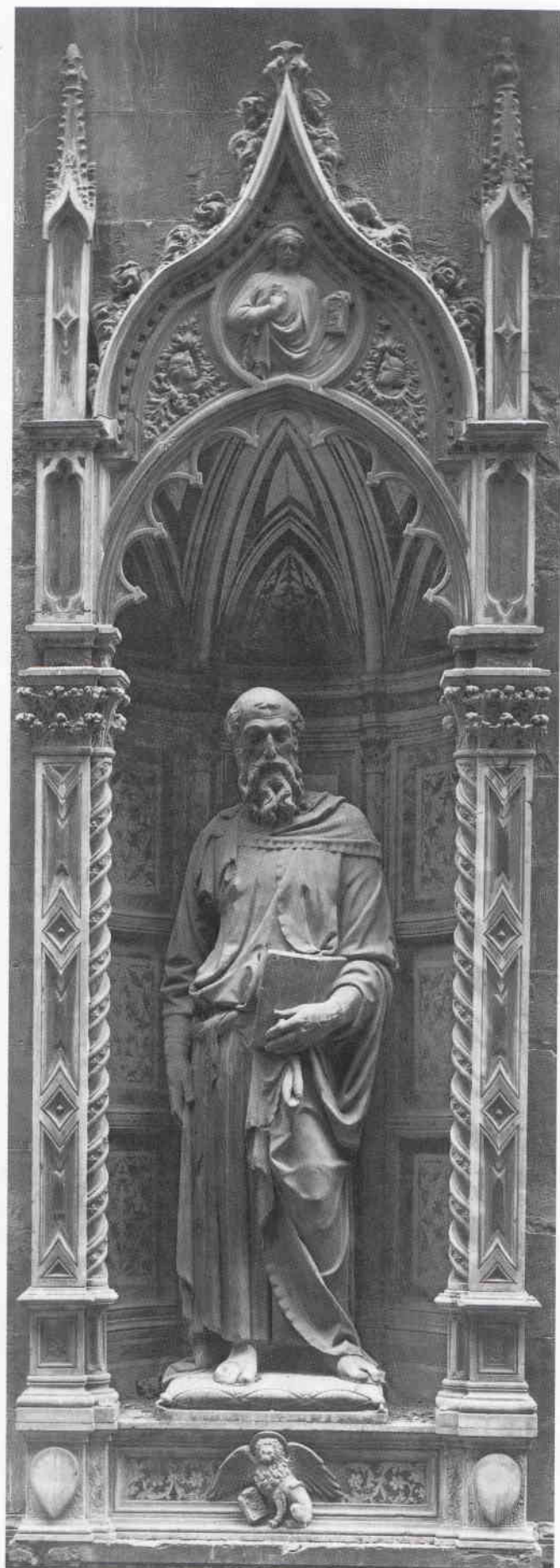
St. Mark's mantle, like David's, is tied about the shoulders, and folds of cloth fall around the hips without concealing their structure. The figure is represented standing in a pose derived from antiquity that is known as *contrapposto*: the left knee comes forward against the cloth to demonstrate that it is relaxed, while straight folds reinforce the role of the weight-bearing leg. This treatment of the drapery bears a striking resemblance to that of the caryatids from the ancient Greek Erechtheum in Athens, a monument Donatello might possibly have known from a drawing or heard of from a traveler who had visited the Acropolis. It is more likely that he was inspired by one of the copies of or variations on these figures that survived from Roman times in Italy. Donatello's figure suggests the potential for movement more strongly than the Greek caryatids because of the way the axes of the body twist in space.

It has been claimed that this statue represents such an abrupt break with tradition that it could be described as a mutation—a fundamental declaration of the new Renaissance position with respect to the visible world. Yet it has not been emphasized how much this new position is stated with simple, practical means. No drawings or models survive to help us reconstruct Donatello's creative process; perhaps he used a method described by Giorgio Vasari more than a century later, who said that a sculptor should first model a clay figure in the nude. The next step was to dip sheets of cloth in what potters today call "slip" (a very thin paste of water and clay), hang these masses of cloth on the clay figure until the drapery fell in a naturalistic manner, and let them harden. The sculptor could then make a full-scale statue in marble or bronze on the basis of this draped model. There is no way of knowing whether Donatello used this process in designing the *St. Mark*, but one of his later works, *Judith and Holofernes* (see fig. 12.7), demonstrates that he used it at least once on a large scale; over Judith's forehead we can see where the slip broke away during casting and the cloth itself was cast into the bronze. Perhaps the convincing naturalism of the cloth in the *St. Mark* is, in part, the result of Donatello's use of just such a model.

According to Vasari, guild officials objected to the figure of *St. Mark* when they saw it in the studio and refused to allow it to be installed in their tabernacle. Vasari does not

7.12. DONATELLO. *St. Mark.* 1411–16. Marble figure, originally with gilded decoration and metal additions; height 7'10" (2.39 m). Orsanmichele, Florence. Commissioned by the Arte dei Linaioli e Rigattieri. Niche by Perfetto di Giovanni and Albizzi di Pietro. The figure's nose has been damaged and restored. Historic photograph taken before the figure was removed from its niche.

detail their complaint, but the long torso and short legs of the figure may have made it seem malproportioned. The sculptor asked them to allow him to work on it in its final position and, after it was placed in its niche at Orsanmichele, he pretended to continue carving behind a screen. Without having made any changes, he then unveiled the figure and called in the officials, who enthusiastically approved the same work they had previously rejected. Presumably, Donatello had from the beginning calculated that he needed to lengthen the torso and shorten the legs in order to make the figure seem naturalistic when seen by a viewer standing in the street below.

Donatello's statue is formidable not only in the conviction and naturalism of its rendering, but also in the concentrated power of the face. St. Mark seems, on the one hand, to assess the outer world and its dangers and, on the other, to summon up the inner resources of the self. This noble face with its expression of severe determination can be understood as a symbolic portrait of the ideal Florentine under stress, as identified at the time by humanist propagandists for the republic. The expression conveys the virtues demanded in a crisis: the eyes flare, the brow knits, the head lifts, and the figure draws back in pride, expressing moral grandeur. By contrast, the styles of Florence's opponents, Milan and Naples, remained flamboyantly Gothic at this time, and the sculpted figures created in those cities maintained a courtly, arrogant expression.

In the details of the *St. Mark*, the optical suggestion first noted in the *David* become more evident. Donatello did not model the curls of Mark's hair and beard in the round as the Pisano family or Ghiberti would have done; grooves and scratches suggest reality as it is revealed in light and shade. Donatello's interest in optical effects led him to abandon Ghiberti's incised cornea edge and drilled pupil, which set out to preserve the external shape of the eyeball; in *St. Mark* the pupil is dilated, becoming a deep hole, so that the resulting shadows suggest the transparency of the cornea. The eye Donatello creates through suggestion is thus more realistic in effect than Ghiberti's replication of the eyeball in marble.

Donatello's new approach to figural sculpture is taken a step further in his *St. George* (fig. 7.13), also for Orsanmichele. The marble figure, removed from its niche at the end of the nineteenth century and placed in a museum for protection, was replaced by a cast in bronze. St. George was the patron saint of the guild of armorers and sword makers, whose importance must have jumped sharply in the days when Florence was threatened by Ladislaus. But we can no longer see the figure of St. George as Donatello originally conceived it: a socket hole in his right hand, still bearing traces of corroded metal, and drill holes at various points indicate that the figure once sported the products



7.13. DONATELLO. *St. George.* c. 1420. Marble, height 6'5" (1.95 m). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Commissioned by the Arte dei Corazzai e Spadai for their niche on Orsanmichele, Florence. See also fig. 7.1.

Writing about this figure in the sixteenth century, Francesco Bocchi said: "The legs move, the arms are ready, the head alert, and the whole figure acts; by virtue of the character, the manner and form of the action presents to our eyes a valiant, invincible, and magnanimous soul."

made by guild members—a helmet, a jutting sword or spear, and a belt and sheath. These have long since disappeared. The helmet would probably have covered most of the curly locks, and the sword or spear would have protruded menacingly into the street.

The face comes as a surprise. It is the countenance not of an ideal hero but of an individual who is experiencing fear. The history of human crises is studded with individuals who never did a brave thing until an emergency called forth a burst of action. Donatello's *St. George* shows us a sensitive, reflective face with delicate features: a slightly receding chin, dilated eyes looking outward as if dreading the approaching combat, and a brow furrowed with nervous tension. His stance—balanced on both feet—expresses preparedness. His entire being seems to be marshaling his resources in the proximity of danger. "In times of safety anyone can behave well," said Niccolò da Uzzano, one of the humanist leaders of the Florentine Republic, "it is in adversity that real courage is shown." This passage and others written by the humanists describe the qualities seen in the *St. George* and other monumental statues of the new age. With the saint's combination of alert stance and worried expression, Donatello introduced the element of narrative into large figural sculpture and related that narrative to contemporary events. It is even possible that the cross on George's shield is not only the emblem of the Christian saint but also a reference to the red cross on a white ground that is the emblem of the *popolo*—the people—of Florence (this emblem, among others, is visible along the top of the Palazzo dei Priori; see fig. 2.40). While Donatello's earlier *St. Mark* demonstrated a new sense of character, his *St. George* becomes part of a larger narrative that reaches its climax in the sculpted predella below.

This marble relief (fig. 7.14), which represents the story of the young hero's victory over the dragon, demonstrates a startling innovation in relief sculpture. Earlier sculptors creating reliefs in stone or bronze had thought of the background as a plane in front of which figures were placed or from which they seemed to emerge, as in the competition reliefs discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Even Ghiberti, although apparently wanting to penetrate the inert background, did so only by means of spatial implication. In stone relief sculpture, for example, figures were carved almost in the round, barely adhering to the background slab, or in a kind of half-round (see figs. 5.5–5.6). A cross-section of the typical ancient or medieval marble relief would show the background slab as a straight line with raised projections corresponding to cross-sections of the figures. But a cross-section of Donatello's *St. George and the Dragon* would be illegible—a series of bumps and hollows. These projections and depressions are subtly manipulated to attract light and cast shadow. Donatello's models for this technique were drawn from antiquity and may even have been such small-scale works as coins or cameos; the profile figure of the princess, with her wind-blown, clinging drapery, is clearly derived from just such an ancient source.

Certain aspects of Donatello's relief sculpture no longer correspond to the idea of the object, but to the image of that object which light casts upon the retina. This is a crucial distinction that can be understood as marking an end to medieval art. The eye is now supreme. Donatello's new technique of optical suggestion is so subtle that he is able to dissolve the barrier between represented object and background. In the background, he transforms the marble into air, showing us distant hills, trees, and convincingly naturalistic clouds, their forms progressively blurred by an



7.14. DONATELLO. *St. George and the Dragon.* c. 1420. Marble, 15³⁄₈ × 47¼" (39 × 120 cm). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Relief from the St. George tabernacle, Orsanmichele, Florence. See also fig. 7.13.

intervening veil of atmosphere. It can be argued that the arcade to the right is possibly the earliest demonstration of Brunelleschi's perspective scheme not by the architect; the loggia is not essential to the story, and notice the emphasis on spatial experimentation in the opening into a second space beyond the loggia in the lines of the pavement beyond the door, and the open window under the loggia. Behind the loggia, progressive diminution makes the line of trees seem to recede into space. While the horse rears as George's lance plunges into the dragon's breast and the princess clasps her hands, the arcade and rocky ground carry the eye back into misty distance and the intervening air seems stirred by a natural breeze.

All this is done in a sketchy, remarkably unsculptural manner, with Donatello employing the chisel as if it were a drawing instrument. The Italian expression for Donatello's innovation is *rilievo schiacciato* (flattened relief). This term is useful but inaccurate, for the forms are not created by flattening. Here Donatello has abandoned the traditional notion of relief in favor of optical suggestion. As revolutionary as the *George* relief is, it is not executed completely in *rilievo schiacciato*; the figures of George, the horse, and the princess are in a kind of half-relief. Only later did Donatello execute reliefs in which every form is treated in the sketchy, optical style seen in the background here. Nevertheless, the *St. George* relief is the earliest demonstration of Donatello's new technique for relief sculpture, as well as the first demonstration by another artist of Brunelleschi's system of linear perspective.

Clearly, Donatello's effects were calculated for the position of the relief on the north side of the building, where it was exposed to a soft, diffused light reflected from the buildings across the street. The relief depends on the autonomy of a single pair of eyes at a defined point in space, as indicated by the use of Brunelleschi's perspective scheme in the loggia. Recession is also suggested in the dragon's cave on the left. Implicit in this approach is a concept of the individual that is alien to the medieval notion of corporate society. Is it coincidental that this new idea first appears in a relief of the victory of St. George, which can be seen as symbolically re-enacting the triumph of Florence against Ladislaus? There were imperfections in Florentine democracy, but the declarations of her humanists, and, conversely, the denunciations of liberty by those who supported the dictators in other centers, leave no doubt that, to contemporaries, the freedom of the individual was at stake. This concept of freedom is often posed as one of the wellsprings of the new style.

In northern Europe, a similar interest in naturalism was developing in the art of Netherlandish miniaturists and panel painters. Their enthusiasm for the visible world and every object it contained resulted in a technique of breath-taking accuracy in representation. But the illustrations of the *Turin–Milan Hours*, the earliest works by Jan van Eyck that show a stage comparable to the new point of view revealed in Donatello's relief, are datable probably to the 1420s. Paradoxically, then, Donatello's work could be called the most advanced pictorial composition of its time. Lorenzo Monaco and his Late Gothic contemporaries give no hint that they knew what Donatello was about.

# Nanni di Banco

Nanni di Banco (c. 1374–1421), a contemporary of Ghiberti and Donatello, was brought up by a sculptor father who worked in the cathedral workshop. Nanni was responsible for statues in three niches at Orsanmichele, the most striking of which is the *Four Crowned Martyrs* (fig. 7.15). According to legend, these Early Christian martyrs were Roman sculptors who were executed for refusing to carve a statue of a pagan god for the emperor Diocletian. The niche retains some Gothic details, but the togalike cloaks of the two figures on the right could hardly look more Roman, and their dignified poses are inspired by ancient Roman statuary. The heads are strikingly reminiscent of Roman portraiture, and it has been suggested that one is a portrait of Nanni's sculptor brother Antonio, who died while the group was being created. The two figures on the right were carved from a single block of marble. This may in part have been practical, given the difficulties of squeezing four figures into a single niche, but it could also reflect the influence of a passage from the ancient Roman writer Pliny the Elder, who in his *Natural History* (c. 77 CE) praised ancient sculptors who had carved two figures from a single block.

Nanni's reliance on and quotation of Roman sources were not unique at the time. The propagandists who wrote in support of the Milanese and Neapolitan autocrats had drawn on literary examples from Imperial Rome; the apologists for the Florentine Republic pointed to the virtues of republican Rome and the Roman people, whose heirs they felt themselves to be. Even the Tuscan version of the Italian language, known as the *volgare* from the Latin word for "common," was defended by the humanists as the true successor to ancient Latin. It is republican models that these statues call to mind. The determinedly Roman nature of Nanni's *Four Crowned Martyrs* may also be the sculptor's attempt to be historically accurate—to represent these sculptors as a part of the ancient Roman world in which they lived, worked, and died. Such an attitude would coincide with the new interest in accurate, researched history evident in the work of contemporary humanists.

There is something conspiratorial about these four men, united in a resolve to die for their principles. The patrons

7.15. NANNI DI BANCO. *Four Crowned Martyrs (Quattro Santi Coronati)* and tabernacle. c. 1409–16/17. White marble figures and polychrome niche of white, green, and gray marble with additions in blue faience; height of figures approx. 6' (1.83 m). Commissioned by the Arte di Pietra e Legname. The two figures on the right were carved from a single block. Historic photograph taken before the figures were removed from their niche. Orsanmichele, Florence. See also fig. 7.1.

were the guild of workers in stone and wood, to which Nanni was inscribed as a member in 1405. By depicting the guild's patrons in this manner, Nanni ennobled its members, as Donatello was shortly to do for the armorers in the *St. George*. The four dignified individuals grouped in a semicircle formed an unprecedented composition in Italian sculpture, one that exercised a profound effect on the art of the Quattrocento and even the Cinquecento, especially on the painter Masaccio (see fig. 8.9). Its impact is even demonstrated in Raphael's frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura (see figs. 17.45–17.49). The *Martyr* to the right, derived from a figure of an ancient Roman orator, seems to speak while the others listen, contemplating their decision and assessing the consequences of their resolution. The debate that we sense is taking place here has been interpreted as a demonstration of the corporate republican ideals of the members of the merchant-class and artisan-class guilds in Florence. Nanni and his father, uncle, and brother were all engaged in various guild and civic responsibilities.

The movements of the drapery folds seem in some cases to sweep the four together, in others to hold them hesi-

tantly apart. But the figures are united by two simple devices: first, the pedestal on which they stand is carved in an arc that follows the placement of their feet; second, the back of the tabernacle is draped in broad folds—a motif taken from ancient sarcophagi that reinforces the semicircular grouping. Details of features, hair, and beards either long or stubbled (the decision not to shave marked, in certain periods of Roman history, the resolve of the penitent) demonstrate an interest in both ancient and Gothic sources, natural enough in a sculptor trained in a fairly conservative tradition. Nanni is apparently not inspired by the optical suggestions of Donatello; his drapery masses, locks of hair and beard, stubble, wrinkles, and veins are fully modeled, not flattened or sketched as in Donatello's illusionistic method.

To enhance the naturalism of the group, the feet of the two outer figures overlap the base, extending into our space. The pedestal below the white marble figures is a distinctive gray-veined marble, emphasizing that the figures are separate from their base. Like the malleable pillow below the feet of Donatello's *St. Mark*, which heightens the sense of reality, Nanni's base suggests that these figures could step out of their tabernacle. In the relief below, carved in a traditional style, four stoneworkers in contemporary dress build a wall, carve a column, measure a capital, and finish a statue of a nude *putto*.

It is idle to speculate what Nanni di Banco might have achieved had he not died young, but the single-minded force of his art makes us wonder whether the course of the Quattrocento might not have been different had he lived to mid-century or even beyond, as did Donatello and Ghiberti. The culminating work of Nanni's brief career is his *Assumption of the Virgin* (fig. 7.16) above the Porta della Mandorla—a doorway of Florence Cathedral that takes its name from the mandorla (almond-shaped glory) surrounding the Virgin. The work, commissioned in 1414, was listed as incomplete in a document at Nanni's death in 1421, but this may refer only to the fact that the ensemble, carved in the workshop, had yet to be mounted on the cathedral.

In contrast to the gravity of Nanni's work at Orsanmichele, his *Assumption* is turbulent. Four angels lift the mandorla, while the Virgin, supported by seraphim, hands her belt to the kneeling St. Thomas as proof of her assumption. Today the relief has lost its most important attribute, for, as in Andrea Orcagna's relief of the same subject at Orsanmichele (see fig. 5.6), the original belt was a length of gold-edged silk that would have moved with the wind. This was soon replaced with a metal version, which is also lost. The figures had gold leaf on selected details, and a painted blue background clarified the crowded composition. Because of the limited space available and the need for a clear narrative when seen from below, the usual



7.16. NANNI DI BANCO. *Assumption of the Virgin*, gable on the 🏛 Porta della Mandorla, Cathedral, Florence. 1414–22. White marble with frame of red and green-black marble and green granite, originally with a painted blue background and gold leaf decoration on details of the figures, a painted metal lily in one of the hands of the Virgin Mary, and a silk sash with gold borders or tassels. The latter was replaced with a copper sash in 1435. The spikes that held the sash in place can still be seen in Mary's hands. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo.

The main relief is composed of eleven sections of white marble. Notice the motif of repeated elaborate hanging lamps shown in perspective in inlaid marble in the elaborate border; lamps are a traditional symbol of the Virgin Mary, but the specific nature of these examples may reflect the use of hanging lamps in Florentine ritual in honor of the Virgin.

witnesses are absent and the scene acquires the character of a private revelation to St. Thomas, the most famous of doubters. The only other figure in the ensemble, except for the angels (three more, making music, fill the point of the gable), is a bear who seems to be trying to shake acorns from an oak tree. The meaning of this unusual addition to the Assumption scene has been difficult to unravel, but one analysis emphasizes that the bear can be connected both to the notion of the wilderness into which the original sinners, Adam and Eve, were exiled, and to the sin of physical gratification or lust. In this light, Frederick Hartt's original suggestion is not far off the mark: "Perhaps Nanni intended to contrast the impossibility of gaining bounty through force, exemplified by the animal's greed and rage, with the golden gift received by St. Thomas through divine grace." It has recently been suggested that this bear may have played a role in inspiring the humanist Leonbattista Alberti when he wrote that the "copiousness and variety" of a good *istoria* (narrative scene) would be well served by adding animals.

The effect of the narrative whole is dramatic and instantaneous. Flying folds of drapery, agitated by the upward movement of Mary's mandorla, envelop Nanni's powerfully modeled figures. The faces are full of individuality, energy, and beauty—all hallmarks of Renaissance style. It is clear that Nanni was in the forefront of the Florentine Renaissance, in full control of its naturalism and classical resources.

## Donatello (c. 1420 to c. 1435)

Donatello was involved repeatedly in work for the Cathedral of Florence, even contributing two small heads to the Porta della Mandorla after Nanni's death. During the twenty years from 1415 to 1435, the sculptor, sometimes in partnership with Nanni di Bartolo, carved seven marble prophets for the Campanile (see fig. 3.25), completing the series of sixteen begun in the Trecento. These statues have now been removed to a museum, where they have lost an essential element of their former effect: the tension between statue and niche so important in works by Donatello, Ghiberti, and others. While the statues at Orsanmichele addressed the citizen from slightly above eye level, the Campanile figures could be viewed only from a great distance. Donatello, who was relatively conservative in his treatment of his earlier statues for this setting, apparently realized after they were installed that he would have to adopt more drastic methods if he wanted to communicate with viewers standing far below.

The most dramatic of the group is the so-called *Zuccone* ("Big Squash," or "Baldy"), a figure sometimes identified as *Habakkuk* (fig. 7.17). Donatello clearly calculated the effect of the statue on an observer standing at least 60 feet

below. The psychological intensity expressed by this figure surpasses anything he had previously created. In Gothic cathedrals and throughout Italian Trecento art, Old Testament prophets and New Testament saints—with the exception of John the Baptist, who lived in the wilderness—are generally dignified characters with flowing robes and well-combed hair. Not so Donatello's emaciated prophet, who



7.17. DONATELLO. *Zuccone* (*Habakkuk?*). c. 1427–36. Marble, height 6'5" (1.95 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo. Historic photograph of the figure on the Campanile, Florence (see fig. 3.25).

seems to throb with the import of his divinely inspired messages and the devastation of his rejection. His stance and expression convey the fiery intensity of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. As *Zuccone* draws his chin in and gazes bitterly down, he opens his mouth as if to speak in condemnation of humanity's iniquities. The figure is skin and bone under the rough cloth robe, which suggests the sweep of a toga. The hand clutches convulsively at the strap and the rolled top of a scroll. The bald head is carved with brutal strokes, left intentionally rough, and the marks that represent stubble on the chin, the flare of the lips, and the eyebrows have been exaggerated by the effects of weathering. ·

One wonders where Donatello found the models for this work. Denunciatory types still roam the streets of Florence; perhaps in Donatello's day there were even more. Certain features suggest that Donatello was inspired by the realism found in Roman portrait busts, but, whatever his sources, they have been transfigured by the sculptor's imaginative powers. The pulsating folds, disordered locks, tense pose,

and searing glance all express the difficult task facing the prophet, who must communicate to an unwilling people what he believes to be an inspiration received from God.

Donatello's optical interests and the vitality of his dramatic style reach a climax in the *Feast of Herod* (fig. 7.18) for the baptismal font of the Cathedral of Siena, a project in which he was involved with other sculptors, including Ghiberti and the Sienese Jacopo della Quercia (fig. 7.19). His relief offers a virtuoso demonstration of the devices a sculptor can use to create illusionistic space: linear perspective, overlapping, diminution, and reduction in height of relief, leading back to *schiacciato* in the most distant part of the illusion.

Donatello's *Feast of Herod* is closer to a consistent statement of one-point perspective than any earlier work in Western art. It is not a painting, of course, but a three-dimensional relief that was to be placed on the base of the baptismal font and would, therefore, be seen from above at a rather sharp angle. To use a perspective scheme that coordinated with the observer's high viewpoint would



7.18. DONATELLO. *Feast of Herod.* 1423–27. Gilded bronze, 23½" (60 cm) square. 🏛 Panel on the Baptismal Font, Baptistery, Siena.

**7.19. LORENZO GHIBERTI, DONATELLO, JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA**, and others. Baptismal Font. 1416–31. Marble, gilded bronze, and colored enamel. Baptistery, Siena.

have demanded architecture that was sharply distorted. Instead, Donatello placed his vanishing point, which can be established by tracing floor lines, moldings, and the recession of capitals and lintels, in the center of the relief. But Donatello, always an enemy of regularity, introduced so many different levels of recession that it is impossible to trace the perspective scheme he used. He also created, in the wall directly behind the figures, two curious openings that recede at angles counter to that of the perspective scheme. By interrelating the square slabs of the inlaid floor diagonally, so that the extended diagonal of one becomes the diagonal of the square in the next row, he imposes on the basic system of orthogonals, which meet at a vanishing point within the frame, two secondary systems of diagonals that meet at other vanishing points to either side, outside the frame. This produces an external control for establishing a systematic diminution of the distance between the transversals in depth. These secondary systems are also a part of Alberti's perspective theory. (For Alberti's later formulation of perspective, see pp. 248–49.)

Nothing in Donatello's architectural perspective, with its views through three successive levels separated by arches and piers, prepares us for what is happening in the foreground space. There the scheme is disrupted by the main event: the presentation of St. John's severed head on a platter to Herod. The moment Donatello has chosen is the explosion of an emotional grenade that produces a wave of shock among the spectators. Herod shrinks back; a guest expostulates; another recoils, covering his face with his hand; two children scramble away, then stop short and look back. At the right Salome continues her dance, but two attendants stare, one with his arm over the other's shoulder. Donatello incorporates us and our position into his work, for, when the work is viewed from above, it becomes clear that the figures are grouped in a semicircle, with the center left open to express the explosive drama of the event. The perspective network of interlocking grids is half submerged in the rush of conflicting drapery folds. Donatello's dramatic scene was to influence later artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, whose *Last Supper* (see fig. 16.23) adopts and refines the dramatic principle on which this history-making relief was based.

## Jacopo della Quercia

The fourth remarkable sculptor of the Early Renaissance was the Sienese Jacopo della Quercia (c. 1371/4?–1438), son of a goldsmith and wood engraver. If Vasari's accounts of Jacopo's early life are accurate, he must already have enjoyed a considerable career as a sculptor before taking part in the competition for the doors of the Florentine Baptistery in 1401, but little is preserved that can be attributed with certainty to his early period. The major sculptural cycle from his middle period is the Fonte Gaia in Siena, a public fountain in Siena's main square, the Piazza del Campo (see fig. 1.9).

The fountain's name, which means "gay" or "happy," was taken from an earlier fountain on the same site and suggests the importance of a reliable water supply in the city. Jacopo's elaborate decoration further demonstrates the importance of this project for Siena. Because the fountain was carved of soft stone and the sculptures were damaged over time, we illustrate a rare surviving drawing of the left third of the fountain (fig. 7.20). While Ghiberti's drawing for the *Flagellation* (see fig. 7.7) was made as the sculptor was planning his composition, the finished detail we see here suggests that Jacopo's may have been a presentation drawing, made to be shown to and approved by the representatives of the commune of Siena who were the fountain's patrons. This and a second drawing that shows the right section of the fountain may have originally been preserved as legal documents because they recorded what the artist proposed and the commune approved.

The water poured into a central rectangular basin from multiple spigots in walls decorated with high-relief sculptures. The central niche, not seen in this drawing, contained the Virgin and Child, the Virgin being the patron saint of Siena. Four of the eight civic virtues (Wisdom, Hope, Fortitude, Prudence, Justice, Humility, Temperance, and Faith) that surrounded her are included in the sketch. Reliefs at either end (not seen here) represented the Creation of Adam and the Expulsion from Eden, references to the "original sin" from which Mary and Christ redeemed humankind and from which believers are liberated through baptism, the sacrament of water.



7.20. JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA. Preparatory drawing for the Fonte Gaia. 1409. Pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash, on vellum; 7¾ × 8½" (19.9 × 21.4 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1949 (49.191).
The second section of this drawing is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The fountain itself, located in Piazza del Campo across from Siena's city hall, the Palazzo Pubblico, was 33'4" wide and 19'3" deep (10.17 × 5.57 m) and was commissioned by the commune of Siena. It was completed in 1419. Because of the use of poor-quality stone, the damaged figures and reliefs have been removed and are now in the museum at the former hospital of Sta. Maria della Scala in Siena.

On high bases on either side of the fountain were two standing female figures, each with two children. Their identity is not certain, but one theory holds that they represent Rea Silvia, the mother of Romulus and Remus (fig. 7.21), and Acca Larenzia, the wet nurse of the twins. (Remus was considered to be the father of Senus, founder of the city of Siena.) More recently the women have been identified as Divine and Public Charity. Whatever their iconographic meaning, these maternal figures with babies must be seen as representations of fertility, especially when understood in the context of life-giving water at a public fountain. In these figures Jacopo builds upon his knowledge of the Renaissance movement in Florence, adding a sensuous treatment of the female body not yet seen in Florentine art. A sense of organic life is conveyed not just by the subtle *contrapposto* and the lively movement of the babies, but also by the swelling contours of the group as a whole. With a surprisingly meditative expression, the figure of *Rea Silvia/Public Charity* looks sharply downward, making eye contact with the Sienese citizens who would come to the fountain daily to get water. A comparison with the figure in the drawing shows how dramatically Quercia changed his composition as the work developed.

In many respects, the art of Jacopo della Quercia is a curious phenomenon. He had little interest in the new classicizing architectural motifs of the Florentine Renaissance, paying no attention to its spatial harmonies, and his rare landscape elements remained Giottesque to the end of his days. Yet in his reliefs for the portal of San Petronio at Bologna (fig. 7.22), he projected a world of action in which figures of superhuman strength struggle and collide. In the *Creation of Adam* (fig. 7.23), for example, a solemn, long-bearded Creator with a triangular halo gathers about him a mantle with sweeping folds that suggest the power of Donatello's and Nanni's drapery yet none of their feeling for real cloth. With his right hand the Creator confers on Adam a living soul. The figure of Adam, whose name in Hebrew means "earth," is understood as part of the ground from which he is about to rise. Unlike Ghiberti's delicately constructed nudes (see fig. 10.13), this husky figure is broadly built and smoothly modeled. Jacopo may have patterned the pose and treatment of the figure after the classical Adam in a Byzantine ivory relief now in the Bargello in Florence. Jacopo's noble figure, in turn, exercised a strong influence on the pose used by Michelangelo in the *Creation of Adam* on the Sistine Ceiling (see fig. 17.32). Jacopo's heroic figures appealed to Michelangelo, who must have studied these reliefs during his two visits to Bologna. Of the garden itself, only the Tree of Knowledge, represented as a fig tree, is visible. A sense of muscular struggle dominates Jacopo's



7.21. JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA. *Rea Silvia* or *Public Charity*, from the Fonte Gaia. 1418–19. Marble, 5'4" (1.63 m). Museum at the former hospital of Sta. Maria della Scala, Siena.

7.22. JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA. Main Portal. 1425–38.
Commissioned by Louis Aleman, Archbishop of Arles and Papal
Legate to Bologna. 🏛 S. Petronio, Bologna.



7.23. JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA. *Creation of Adam.*
c. 1429–34. Marble, 39 × 36¼" (99 × 92 cm) with frame.
🏛 Panel on Main Portal, S. Petronio, Bologna.



7.24. JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA. *Expulsion.* c. 1429–34.
Marble, 39 × 36¼" (99 × 92 cm) with frame. 🏛 Panel on Main
Portal, S. Petronio, Bologna.

*Expulsion* (fig. 7.24), its composition roughly the same as
that of his relief of the same subject on the Fonte Gaia. At
San Petronio, however, the figures are well enough pre-
served to exhibit the interplay of muscular forces and a
remarkable physicality. Adam attempts to resist, but he is
forcibly thrust away by a pugnacious angel. Eve's pose is
based on that of a *Venus pudica*, the modest Venus type
favored by Greek sculptors and their Roman copyists.

The innovations of these Early Renaissance sculptors
changed the history of sculpture and had a powerful
impact on the painters of the period, as we shall see in the
next chapter.

# TRANSITIONS IN FLORENTINE

# PAINTING

During the first two decades of the Quattrocento, when Florentine sculptors were already creating works in the new Renaissance style, painters were still producing altarpieces and fresco cycles in variants of the Gothic style. They were not concerned with the problems that inspired the sculptors, and today their works seem to belong to another era. In their midst there emerged, about 1420 or 1421, a non-Tuscan artist of extraordinary originality who, judging from the importance of his commissions, must have created a sensation.

## Gentile da Fabriano

Our earliest documentary reference to the painter Gentile da Fabriano (c. 1385?–1427), in 1408, reveals that he was living in Venice, far from his native town of Fabriano in the Marches. In the Doge's Palace, Gentile painted a fresco, now lost, of a naval battle between the Venetians and the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto III, that took place in the midst of a great storm. Gentile's depiction of the storm clouds, waves, and battle was said to have been so naturalistic that those who saw it were filled with terror; as we shall see, Gentile was a master of naturalistic landscape and atmospheric effects.

Although many of Gentile's works are lost, a splendidly preserved altarpiece in Florence (fig. 8.2) demonstrates his unique combination of International Style richness and naturalistic detail. Gentile's patron for the *Adoration of the Magi* was Palla Strozzi, perhaps the richest man in the city. Narrative subjects were unusual for Florentine altar-

pieces and the splendor of Gentile's treatment was unprecedented, but the destined location of the panel in a sacristy justified both subject and splendor. The Adoration of the Magi marks the moment when the infant Christ was first shown to the Gentiles, and a sacristy is the area where the clergy robe themselves and prepare for saying the Mass, during which Christ becomes manifest in the Eucharist on the altar. The theme and the gorgeous garments of the magi were thus appropriate. The frame recalls earlier Gothic examples (compare fig. 5.3), but here an exuberant vitality in the decorative elements unifies the forms and the painted areas in the various roundels and gables demonstrate a new interest in naturalism. The left and right gables feature roundels of the *Annunciation*, while in the central gable a youthful God blesses the scene. Prophets recline in the spandrels. In the predella, the *Nativity*, the *Flight into Egypt*, and the *Presentation in the Temple* appear almost as one continuous strip. The prolific ornamentation comes to a climax in the naturalistically represented flowers and fruits in the frames, which burst from their Gothic openings as if they are growing out over the gold itself.

Three small scenes in the high arches of the main panel narrate earlier moments in the journey of the magi to Bethlehem. In the left arch, the magi gaze at the star from a mountain top. Before them stretches a wavy sea, with ships waiting at the shore. In the central arch, the magi ride up a curving road toward the open gate of Jerusalem. In the right arch they are about to enter the walls of Bethlehem. In the foreground they arrive at their destination—the cave of Bethlehem, with ox, ass, and manger, the ruined shed,

8.1. MASACCIO. *St. Peter Baptizing the Neophytes.* 1420s. Fresco, 8'1" × 5'8" (2.47 × 1.7 m). Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence. See also figs. 8.7–8.8. It has been suggested that the landscape in this scene was painted by Masolino. This fresco was painted in ten days.

and the modest family. The oldest magus prostrates himself before the Christ Child, his crown beside him on the ground; the second kneels and lifts his crown; the youngest, waiting his turn, still wears his. This right-to-left sequence as the magi approach Christ seems almost cinematic. Attendants crowd the stage; some restrain horses, which are shown from both front and back, a compositional motif that will later become common in Italian art.



8.2. GENTILE DA FABRIANO. *Adoration of the Magi* (Strozzi altarpiece). Dated May 1423. Panel, 9'10" × 9'3" (3 × 2.82 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. The right predella, the *Presentation in the Temple*, is a copy; the original is in the Louvre, Paris. Commissioned by Palla Strozzi for his family burial chapel, the Sacristy of Sta. Trinita, Florence. A biography of the banker Palla Strozzi was included in a compendium of the lives of famous Florentines written in the fifteenth century by the humanist and book-dealer Vespasiano da Bisticci.

Others toy with monkeys and leopards or release falcons. The panoramic views and the rendering of farms, distant houses, and vineyards suggest that Gentile may have seen Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Government* series in Siena (see figs. 4.28–4.30). Gentile's landscape backgrounds and realistic animals were also influenced by Lombard painting (see figs. 5.21, 15.5). Gentile can be classified as an International Gothic artist, but his art is distinct from that of Lorenzo Monaco and the other Late Gothic painters in Florence (see fig. 5.12). He was uninterested in profiles, for example, and throughout his work line is understood as part of a directional flow not on the surface but in space, whether this flow is seen in the processions in the background, the fluid curves of a horse's massive body, or the undulating drapery of silks, velvets, and other fine fabrics.

The birds and animals in the *Adoration* are represented with scrupulous naturalism, while the figures have a new psychological realism. Irreverent attendants exchange glances and, it seems, jokes as their royal masters are caught up in worship, or they look upward in suspense at a pair of fighting birds. The two midwives, like some guests at a wedding, examine one of the gifts as if to assess its value. While chained monkeys chatter happily, the ox looks patiently down toward the Christ Child. Over the rim of a king's halo the ass stares with enormous eyes, his ears lifted as if catching unaccustomed sounds. The carefully observed dog in the right foreground, wearing a bejeweled collar, seems to be imitating the magi in adopting a position of reverence toward the Christ Child—until

the horse steps on him. In the background other dogs chase hares, horses prance and rear, one horse kicks another who then complains, and—in one astonishing detail—two soldiers seem to be mugging a wayfarer. Gentile seems intent on re-creating the whole fabric of the visible world.

His color is subdued and rich, full of subtle hints and reflections. He may have studied Florentine sculpture and perhaps even the paintings of Masaccio that we will be discussing shortly; the modeling of some of the heads and the sharply foreshortened figure removing the spurs from the youngest king suggest this possibility. Nonetheless, within this display of visual richness and naturalism, certain basic archaisms remain. In the main panel of the altarpiece, Gentile shows little interest in recent investigations of space and illusionism: as in Trecento painting, his figures seem too large for their setting, gold leaf over molded gesso is used for the damasks and gilded ornaments, and the landscape carries us to a distant horizon only to end in a gold background.

In the predella scenes below, however, Gentile makes a revolutionary break with tradition by abandoning the flat gold or undifferentiated blue background and representing a sky with atmosphere and natural light. The *Nativity* (fig. 8.3), like that of Lorenzo Monaco (see fig. 5.13), is founded on the vision of St. Bridget, but in this painting the light effects are more natural. Although the pool of light emanating from the Christ Child is still a surface of gold leaf with incised rays, Gentile also represents the effects of this light as it shines upon the ceiling of the cave and the faces of the kneeling animals. After illuminating



8.3. GENTILE DA FABRIANO. *Nativity,* on the predella of the Strozzi altarpiece (fig. 8.2). 1423. Panel, 12¼ × 29½" (32 × 75 cm).

8.4. GENTILE DA FABRIANO. *Flight into Egypt*, on the predella of the Strozzi altarpiece (fig. 8.2). 1423. Panel, 12¼ × 43¼" (32 × 110 cm).

the Virgin, it casts her shadow on the shed and then casts the shadow of the shed itself upon the underside of the lean-to where the midwives have taken shelter—one curious, the other napping. This light even picks out the branches of the tree under which Joseph sleeps, making a pattern of light against the dark hills. A flood of gold, issuing from the angel announcing the news to the shepherds, illuminates one portion of the hills; the other hills billow softly against a night sky dotted with shining stars.

The exquisite attention to nature in this scene is still partly Trecentesque, for it is miraculous rather than natural light that illuminates the scene and casts the shadows (see fig. 3.30). Yet this is the first painting we know that contains the source of illumination within the picture and maintains its effect so consistently on the represented objects; the supernatural is here treated as if it were natural. The little ruined structure is the same as the one painted in the principal panel above; the only difference is that between December 25 (the birth of Jesus), in the predella, and January 6 (the arrival of the magi), in the main panel, the barren ground has brought forth flowering and fruit-laden trees. Apart from the religious meaning of the scene, the effect is both naturalistic and deeply poetic—especially the dark, distant hills and starry sky.

Equally convincing is the *Flight into Egypt* (fig. 8.4). The little family, still attended by the midwives, moves along a pebbly road through a rich Tuscan landscape toward a distant city. A sun, raised in relief and gilded, lights the farms and hillsides, and the natural light that seems to wash over the fields, giving the effect of grain ripe for harvesting, is also represented through the use of gold leaf underlying the paint. Distant hills and towers rise against a soft, blue sky—the first natural daytime sky we know in Italian art. Darker toward the zenith, lighter toward the horizon, it is clearly represented with atmospheric perspective. Drifting clouds partly hide one fortified

villa. So velvety is the landscape and so subtly does the light dance across rocks, pebbles, foliage, and people that we easily accept the scene as natural, in spite of the disproportionately large scale of the figures.

Gentile's stay in Florence was short, but his influence there was incalculable. As far as can be determined, he was the first Italian painter to implement the atmospheric discoveries made by Donatello and realized in northern Europe in the miniatures of the Limbourg brothers. He is also, as far as we know, the first Italian painter to depict consistently shadows cast by light from an identifiable source. Gentile put into practice Lorenzo Ghiberti's maxim, "Nothing can be seen without light."

## Masolino and Masaccio

No artists in Florence in the early 1420s understood more clearly Gentile's innovations than two painters who, in spite of being unlikely partners, collaborated on several works. They shared the name Tommaso and the nickname Maso, the Italian version of "Tom." One was known as Masolino ("Little," or "Refined," Tom), the other as Masaccio (the suffix "accio" in Italian usually means "ugly" or "bad" but it can also mean something big and impressive). Perhaps these nicknames were coined to distinguish the two according to appearance, character, or style. Masolino, little concerned with the problems and ideals that inspired the sculptors of the time, created an artificial world of refined shapes and elegant manners, flowerlike colors, and unreal distances. Masaccio, on the other hand, seems to have been uninterested in traditional notions of beauty. One of the revolutionary painters of the Western tradition, he was profoundly influenced by the world of space, emotion, and action that contemporary sculptors had discovered. Yet the two artists managed to work together.

Tommaso di Cristofano Fini—Masolino—was born about 1400 in Panicale in the upper Valdarno (Arno Valley). He joined the Arte dei Medici e Speziali in 1423. Much of his life was spent away from Florence; his most adventurous trip took him to Hungary in the service of the Florentine *condottiere* Pippo Spano, from September 1425 to July 1427. Later he worked in Rome and then, about 1435, in the Lombard village of Castiglione Olona, where he probably died in 1436. Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Mone Cassai—Masaccio—was born in 1401 in what is today San Giovanni Valdarno, not far from Panicale. In January 1422 he joined the guild in Florence and worked there and, in 1426, in Pisa. In 1428 he went to Rome, where he died either later that year or in 1429.

The old tradition that Masolino was Masaccio's teacher was laid to rest by the discovery of an early work by Masaccio, a *Madonna and Child with Saints* (fig. 8.5) in a small church at Cascia di Reggello, on the slopes of the mountain mass that dominates Masaccio's native town. The painting shows Masaccio as a young artist with a personal style that is uniquely his own, without any recourse to the traditions that characterize the style of Masolino. The roughness, impulsiveness, and freedom exhibited in this triptych, dated April 23, 1422, seem to justify Vasari's

account of Masaccio as an artist who cared nothing about material considerations—neither the clothes he wore, the food he ate, the lodgings he inhabited, nor the money he received—so completely was he on fire with "le cose dell'arte" (literally, "the things of art"). The twenty-one-year-old artist painted a rather stiff Madonna, with a high forehead, staring eyes, and a weak chin, on a traditional inlaid marble throne. The Christ Child, homely and stiff-limbed, holds a bunch of grapes and a veil and, like a real baby, stuffs two fingers into his mouth. Two angels kneel facing the throne so that their faces are almost completely lost from view—a pose known as lost profile, which directs the viewer's attention into the illusion of depth. The angels' wings preserve the traditional rainbow gradations, but the feathers are as disheveled as those of urban sparrows. On either side stand pairs of morose saints. Under the guise of this naturalism, the triptych still discloses its traditional religious content, for the grapes Christ holds are a symbol of the Eucharist.

Little trace remains in the triptych of the Gothic or of Ghiberti's mellifluous folds (see fig. 7.8), and at first sight there appears no influence of Gentile either. But Gentile is documented in Florence already in 1420, and it may have been his style that suggested to the young painter the
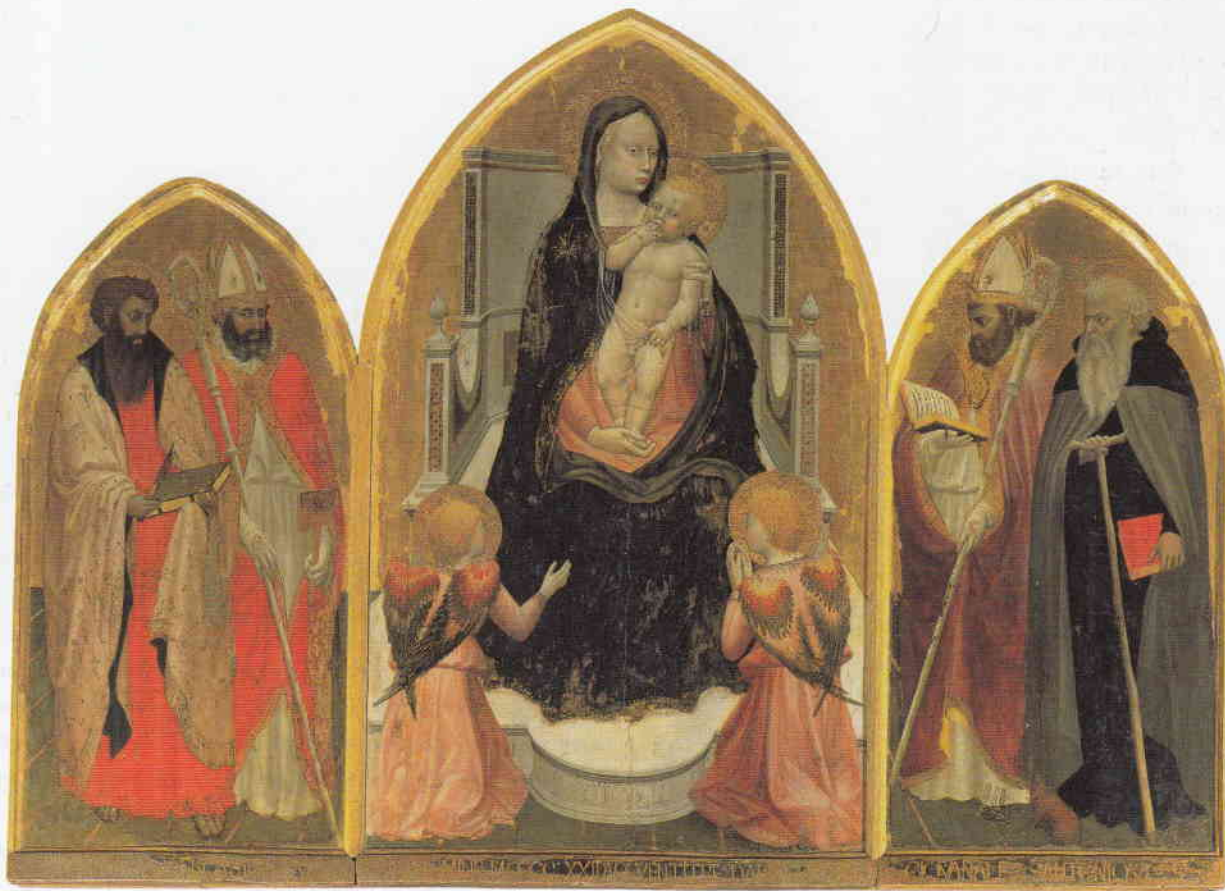


8.5. MASACCIO. *Madonna and Child with Saints.* 1422. Panel, 42½ × 60½" (1 × 1.5 m). ⌂ S. Giovenale, Cascia di Reggello.

sketchiness with which he painted the wings of the angels and the hair and beards of the saints. But already Masaccio has gone farther than Gentile. The hands and limbs and the folds of the angels' tunics in Masaccio's painting exist as forms defined by direct ordinary daylight. Already at twenty-one years of age, Masaccio had assimilated the lesson of Donatello's *St. George and the Dragon* (see fig. 7.14), carved only one or two years earlier.

One year later, in 1423, Masolino signed a dainty *Madonna and Child* (fig. 8.6). Its style, closely related to that of Lorenzo Monaco and of Ghiberti, shows no trace of Masaccio's brutal realism. The delicately modeled features of the Virgin are typical of Masolino's female faces



8.6. MASOLINO. *Madonna and Child.* 1423. Panel, 37¾ × 20½" (96 × 52 cm). Kunsthalle, Bremen. The frame is original.

throughout his career, while the sweetness of the Christ Child, the tenderness with which he touches the Virgin's neck, and the easy curvilinear flow of the drapery are all within the conventions of conservative Florentine style. Only the modeling of the round forms in light and shade suggests that Masolino too was aware of the new developments in painting.

**THE BRANCACCI CHAPEL.** The most important manifesto of a new pictorial style was the decoration of the Brancacci family chapel in the Carmelite Church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence with a cycle by Masaccio and Masolino (figs. 8.7–8.16) that would become a model for generations of later Florentine artists, including Michelangelo.

In the cloister alongside the church, Masaccio had earlier painted a celebrated fresco of the church's consecration that included a procession of contemporary, recognizable Florentines. This influential work was destroyed; only a few drawings of it by later artists survive, including one by the youthful Michelangelo, whose nose was broken in a fistfight here while he was studying the frescoes.

The Brancacci Chapel also suffered losses over time. In the mid-eighteenth century, the paintings of the vault and lunettes were destroyed and replaced with a dome frescoed in that era's style. In 1771, a fire devastated much of the church; the Brancacci Chapel suffered only small areas of loss but the rest of the church was largely destroyed.

Because of evidence suggesting that the lost vault and lunette frescoes, where painting would have begun, were by Masolino, it has been proposed that he alone received the original commission and was later joined by Masaccio, but this is by no means certain, especially given the manner in which they often worked together on other projects. The dating of the chapel frescoes is also uncertain, with some scholars placing them all in 1424–25, before Masolino's trip to Hungary and Masaccio's stay in Pisa in 1426, and others suggesting that work continued in 1427–28. Some suggest that the two painters worked together at some time during the fall of 1427 and/or the spring of 1428. Whether Brunelleschi also played a role in designing the chapel's frescoes is uncertain, but they are framed with pilasters and entablatures in the new, Brunelleschian style (see fig. 8.9). It is also unclear how much of the cycle was left unfinished when the two painters departed for Rome in the spring of 1428; physical evidence suggests that portraits of the Brancacci patrons may have been destroyed after the family was exiled in 1435. In any case, Filippino Lippi was brought in to finish the frescoes in the chapel in the early 1480s. A restoration during the 1980s removed layers of grime, revealing colors that represent a return to Giotto and subtle atmospheric and landscape details.

8.7. MASACCIO, MASOLINO, and FILIPPINO LIPPI. Fresco cycle. Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence.
The miracle-working icon on the altar of the Brancacci Chapel is known as St. Mary of the People (Santa Maria del Popolo). It was in Sta. Maria del Carmine by 1315, but was probably moved into the chapel only in 1422. Between 1422 and 1434 the chapel was owned by Felice Brancacci, the nephew of Pietro di Piuvichese Brancacci (d. 1366/67), who founded the chapel. The money to pay for the frescoes may have been the 200 florins left to the monks of the Carmine by Pietro's son Antonio when he died c. 1383/90. Another possible source for funds was Pietro's widow, Mona Ghetta, who died c. 1414. If these earlier legacies were depleted, it is possible that Felice, as owner of the chapel, also participated in funding his family burial chapel. Felice, who served as the Florentine ambassador to Cairo in the early 1420s, fled Florence, never to return, when Cosimo de' Medici returned from exile in 1434. His property was confiscated.

The chapel frescoes, with two exceptions, represent scenes from the life of St. Peter, the first pope (figs. 8.7–8.8). Since the founding patron of the chapel was named Pietro, the choice of his patron saint for the fresco cycle is not unexpected. At the same time, certain aspects of the cycle can be related to the history of the Carmelite Order, suggesting that the clergy at the church may also have played a role in the choice and interpretation of the theme.

The most problematic of the frescoes in terms of theme is probably the most famous: Masaccio's *Tribute Money* (figs. 8.9–8.10), a subject (Matthew 17:24–27) that was seldom represented. When Christ and the apostles arrived at Capernaum, Peter was confronted by a Roman tax-gatherer who demanded the usual half-drachma tribute. Peter, returning to Christ for instructions, was told that he would find the money in the mouth of a fish near the shore of Lake Galilee. He caught the fish, collected the money, and paid the Roman official, who then departed.

Out of this episode, Masaccio built a scene of great solemnity. He also revised the story. In the middle of the fresco the tax-collector comes directly before Christ and the apostles, who are represented not "at home," as in the text, but standing in a semicircle before a landscape that suggests the river plain where Florence is located. Peter points to our left, indicating that Christ has directed him to Lake Galilee. There, in the background, Peter finds the fish in shallow water, and on the far right, in the fore-

ground, he pays what is due. Center stage is, therefore, occupied by the confrontation of temporal and spiritual power. As Christ speaks to the apostles, their faces betray surprise, indignation, and concern.

The assessment and payment of taxes has a complex social and political history. One aspect of the Florentine debate was whether the clergy could be taxed, a problem for which the story of the Tribute Money provides a biblical precedent. Whether or not there is an explicit Florentine reference here, Masaccio placed the scene on the banks of the Arno. His semicircular arrangement of heavily cloaked figures may have been influenced by Nanni di Banco's impressive *Four Crowned Martyrs* (see fig. 7.15). Masaccio's noble and bold figures certainly suggest that the young artist had studied the behavior of light on the figures, faces, and drapery masses of the powerful figures created by contemporary Florentine sculptors.

In his landscape, however, Masaccio has surpassed sculptors and painters alike. The panoramas of Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Andrea da Firenze had been depicted partly from above and always ended in a flat, abstract background, as if the mountains and trees were placed in front of an impenetrable wall (see figs. 4.30, 5.1). Masaccio, adopting Donatello's low point of view and atmospheric distance, produced a landscape of a grandeur unknown before his time. The wide plane of the impenetrable wall is here dissolved, as it was in the tiny predella panel of the *Flight into Egypt* in Gentile's Strozzi altarpiece (see fig.
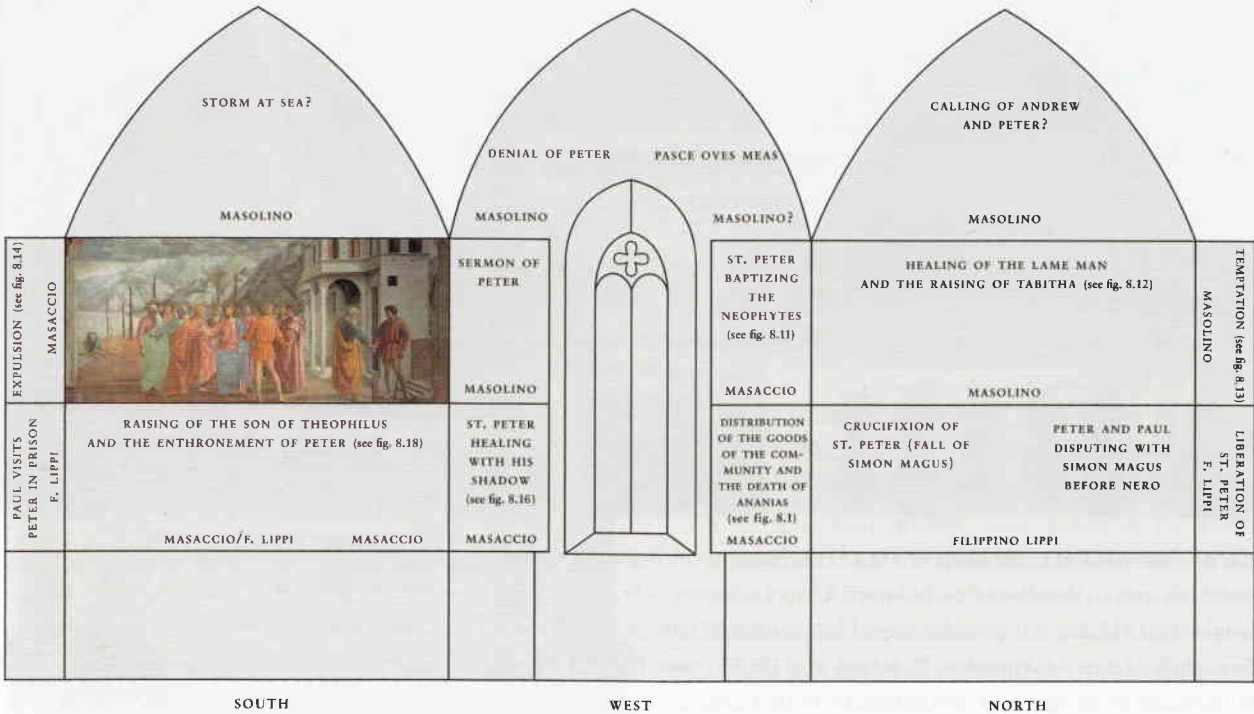


8.8. Iconographic diagram of the fresco cycle at the Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence. Diagram by Sarah Cameron Loyd. The thumbnail picture included for orientation is Masaccio's *Tribute Money* (see fig. 8.9).

8.9. MASACCIO. *Tribute Money.* 1420s. Fresco, 8'1" × 19'7"
(2.47 × 5.97 m). Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence.
The head of Christ is painted on one of the last *giornate* of the
fresco, probably because this is where a nail, driven into the plaster,
had been used as the fulcrum for a string employed to determine the
perspective recession of the building to the right. The head of Christ
is in the style of Masolino and some have suggested that it was
actually painted by him. This fresco was painted in thirty-one days.

Masaccio depicts the apostles as Florentines—not the
officials of the Florentine oligarchy but "men of the
street," like the artisans and peasants on whose support
the republic depended (fig. 8.10). They are painted with
conviction and sympathy—sturdy youths and bearded
older men, rough-featured, each a unique personality. As
if to symbolize both the spatial existence of the figures
and the individuality of the personalities, their haloes are

8.4). The view recedes harmoniously, with none of
Gentile's medieval leaps in scale, past the plain and the
riverbanks, over ridges and distant mountains, some snow-
capped, to the sky and the clouds.

Within this landscape, Masaccio's rugged figures stand
and move at their ease. Both figures and landscape are rep-
resented with the full power of the new style that Masac-
cio has developed. Objects, forms, faces, figures, and
masses of heavy drapery all exist in light, which models
them and sets them convincingly in space. The light is one
of the great innovations in this fresco, for it is not only
consistent—coming from what seems to be a single
source—but it seems to come from the right, where the
actual window of the chapel is located, so that natural
light illuminates the fresco from the same direction, greatly
enhancing its naturalism.

The background is filled with atmosphere. Misty
patches of woodland are sketched near the banks. Masac-
cio's brush seems to have moved with a new ease and
freedom, representing not hairs but hair, not leaves but
foliage, not waves but water, not physical entities but
optical impressions. At times the brush seems to have
applied paint in a manner similar to that used by such
nineteenth-century Impressionists as Edouard Manet or
Claude Monet.
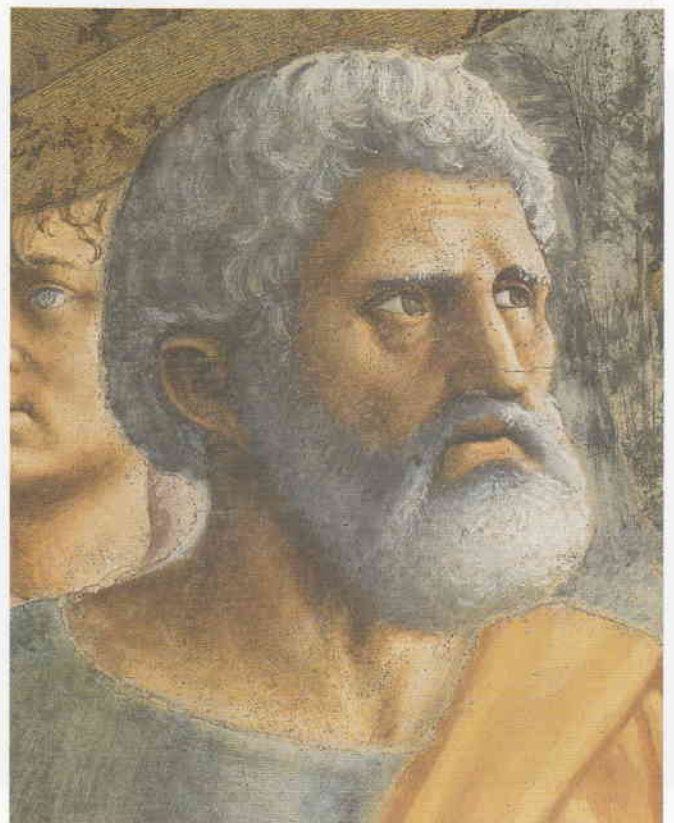


8.10. *Head of St. Peter*, detail of fig. 8.9.

projected in perspective and touch or overlap at random angles. The tax-collector, who is seen from the rear in *contrapposto*, is as astonished as the apostles at the message of Christ.

On the same upper tier, just to the right of the altar, Masaccio painted *St. Peter Baptizing the Neophytes* (see fig. 8.1), the scene set at a cold mountain spring high in the headwaters of the Arno. Here the artist shows himself the equal of Ghiberti and Jacopo della Quercia (see figs. 7.3, 7.23–7.24) in the representation of the nude figure; subsequent generations were impressed by the realism of the shivering figure awaiting his turn, the man drying himself with a towel, and the muscular youth kneeling in the foreground, over whose head St. Peter pours the cold water. Painted with broad strokes, this figure conveys a sense of what it would be like to be cold and almost naked in the presence of inhospitable nature. The massive figures are defined by Masaccio's new *chiaroscuro* technique—smooth and consistent in the surfaces of legs, chests, and shoulders, strikingly sketchy in the heads in the background. The figures of the two young men at the extreme left, who are wearing the Florentine *cappuccio* wrapped around an underlying framework, a *mazzocchio* (see fig. 11.4), appear to be portraits.

Masolino's principal contribution to the upper tier is the fresco opposite the *Tribute Money*, the *Healing of the Lame Man and the Raising of Tabitha* (fig. 8.11), two miracles performed by St. Peter in Lydda and Joppa. Although it would have been difficult for Masolino, given his dual subject, to create a composition as close-knit and unified as that of Masaccio's *Tribute Money*, the two frescoes were constructed using the same perspective scheme, with the vanishing point at the same height within each fresco; perhaps the two painters were working on the two facing scenes simultaneously. Masolino telescoped the space between the two scenes with a continuous Florentine city background, its simple houses, projected in perspective, now sometimes attributed to Masaccio. On the left St. Peter and St. John, with haloes still parallel to the picture plane, command the lame man to rise and walk; on the right they appear in the home of Tabitha (on the ground floor, not the upper story mentioned in the text) and raise her from the dead. The two elegantly dressed young men in the center are the messengers sent from Joppa to fetch St. Peter and St. John with the greatest speed, even though their impassive faces reveal no sense of urgency.

Masolino's drapery lacks both the fullness and the suppleness of Masaccio's, and there is little sense of the underlying figure. Expressions seem forced, and the drama unconvincing. The representation of light, however, is sophisticated; rocks scattered on the ground cast shadows that are directly related to the placement of the window within the chapel. In addition to emphasizing the consistent light source and adding another measurable element



8.11. MASOLINO. *Healing of the Lame Man and the Raising of Tabitha.* 1420s. Fresco, 8'1" × 19'3" (2.47 × 5.9 m). Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence. This fresco was painted in thirty days.

to the spatial recession, they may also be a reference to St. Peter, whose name means "stone" and who is recognized as the "rock" on which the Roman Church was founded.

To modern eyes the divergent styles of the two friends collide abruptly in the scenes representing the *Temptation* (fig. 8.12) and *Expulsion* (fig. 8.13), which face each other across the entrance arch. Masolino and Masaccio may well have found the division of labor reasonable—to Masolino the less dramatic scene, to Masaccio a moment of personal and universal tragedy. Restoration has removed leaves that were added later to cover the figures' genitals, and Adam and Eve are represented as naked. How these scenes are related to the main cycle has been much debated; but perhaps the reason for their inclusion was based on the



8.12. MASOLINO. *Temptation*. 1420s. Fresco, 7' × 2'11" (214 × 89 cm). Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence. This fresco was painted in six days.
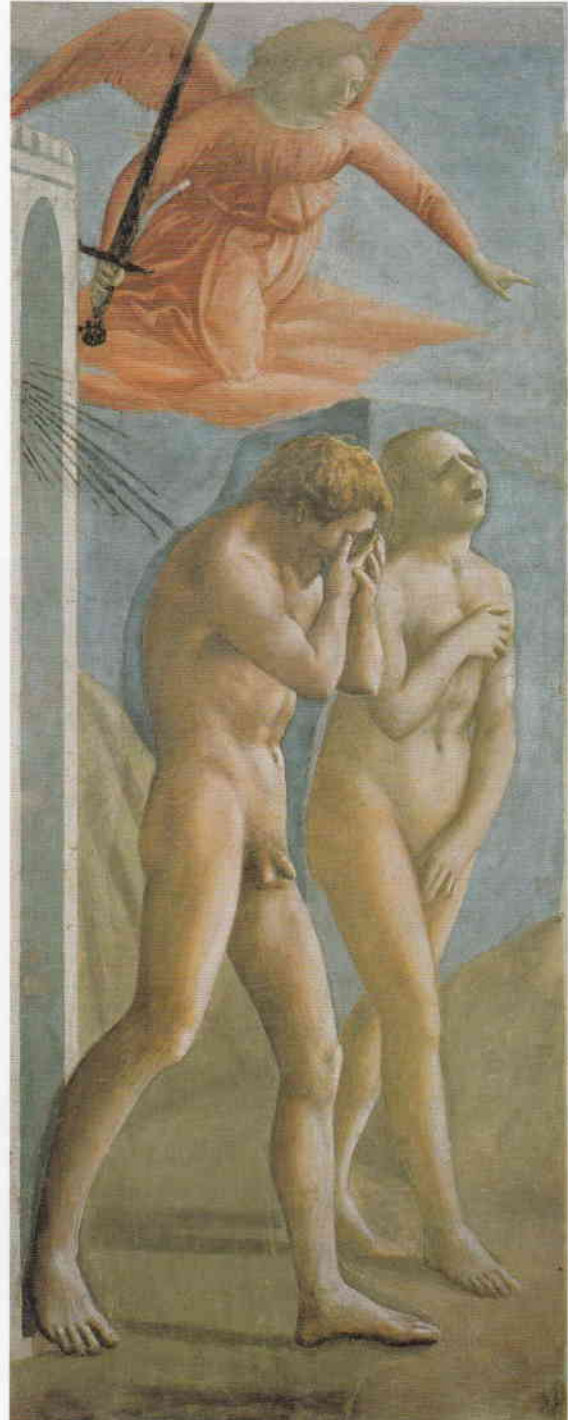


8.13. MASACCIO. *Expulsion*. 1420s. 7' × 2'11" (214 × 89 cm). Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine. This fresco was painted in four days.

idea that the Church, under Peter and the papacy, is the institution that helps humanity overcome the sin of Adam and Eve. Whatever the theological or historical basis for their inclusion, these paired nude figures are not usually a part of the Peter legend.

Masolino painted a gentle Adam and an equally mild Eve, undisturbed by the trouble that is about to ensue. She throws one arm lightly around the tree trunk while, from the bough above, the serpent's human head tries to attract her attention. Adam and Eve's flesh appears naturally soft, but the feet hang instead of support, and the figures are so elegantly silhouetted against the dark background that they seem like cut-outs.

Masaccio's *Expulsion* was perhaps influenced by Jacopo della Quercia's relief on the Fonte Gaia, which is similar in composition to the one in Bologna (see fig. 7.24), but the painter infused the scene with even greater intensity. He abandoned the physical contest between the angel and Adam; now a calm, celestial messenger hovers above the gate, holding a sword in one hand and pointing with the other to the barren world outside Eden. Adam moves forth at the angel's bidding as if driven by his shame. He ignores his nakedness to bury his face in his hands (fig. 8.14). His mouth contorts in anguish and the muscles of his abdomen convulse. Eve remembers to cover her nakedness, but she throws her head back, her mouth open in a cry of despair. The drama has been reduced to its essential elements: two naked, suffering humans pushed out into the cold unknown, forced from an idyllic garden to face a future of work and then death.

The scenes in the lower register flanking the altar, both by Masaccio, share a common perspective that converges behind the altarpiece. On the left is *St. Peter Healing with His Shadow* (fig. 8.15), a subject as rare as the *Tribute Money* and one that would have been impossible to represent before cast shadows entered the artistic repertory. The setting is a Florentine alley with projecting rooms supported on struts. As the architecture recedes, St. Peter walks toward us, not even looking at the sick over whom his shadow passes. The vivid face of the lame man at the lower left is an unforgettable example of Masaccio's observation. Masaccio's 1427 tax declaration, written in his own hand, is preserved, and the words are set out with a simple dignity that seems consistent with the narrative interpretation seen in this fresco. Some of the heads seem to be portraits; it has been suggested that the bearded man in a short blue smock is a portrait of Donatello.
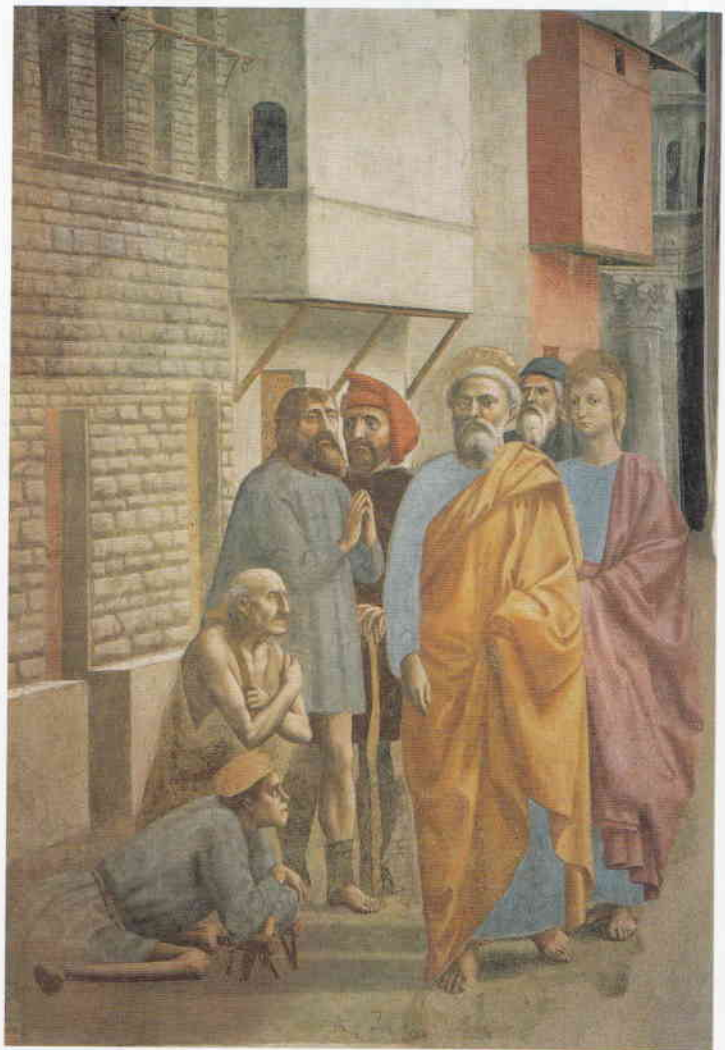


8.15. MASACCIO. *St. Peter Healing with His Shadow*. 1420s. Fresco, 7'7" × 5'4" (2.3 × 1.6 m). Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine. This fresco was painted in ten days.



8.14. MASACCIO. Heads of Adam and of Eve, detail of fig. 8.13.

In Masaccio's *Raising of the Son of Theophilus and the Enthronement of St. Peter* (fig. 8.16), the artist has adopted an S-shaped plan in depth for the figures, with one group centered around the miracle at the left, the other around Peter being adored by Carmelites at the right. These curves, one moving toward us, the other away, are locked in a rectilinear architectural enclosure, formed partly by the palace of Theophilus, partly by the austere architectural block before which St. Peter is enthroned.

The presence of the Carmelites in the same scene as Peter may be a reference to a contemporary debate about the origin of the Carmelites: while members of the order argued that it had been founded by the prophet Elijah and that some members were baptized by Peter himself, detractors maintained that the order had been founded in the twelfth century in the Holy Land. By representing Carmelites worshipping St. Peter, Masaccio supported the Carmelite account of their ancient origins.

The architectural setting is by Masaccio, as are most of the figures except for the five at the extreme left, eight in the central section, and the delicate kneeling boy, all of whom, style suggests, were painted by Filippino Lippi. The

palace of Theophilus shows the inspiration of Brunelleschi in the Corinthian pilasters and pedimented windows, which resemble those of the Ospedale degli Innocenti (see fig. 6.13). The wall divided into repeated panels of inlaid colored marble that forms the back of the scene is enlivened by the freely painted trees and potted plants that are placed in an asymmetrical sequence against the sky.

The composition is abstract and geometric. The masses of the figures, projected so convincingly in depth and light, are fixed within the patterns of the embracing curvilinear and rectilinear framework within which they are set. Only the central St. Peter (by Masaccio, with the exception of the outstretched hand) is free to move and act. The meaning of the fresco is reduced to simple and compelling terms: St. Peter appears twice, at the two foci of the S-plan; other mortals, including Theophilus, are only incidental elements in the structures that revolve around the Church.

**THE PISA POLYPTYCH.** Masaccio worked in Pisa from February to December of 1426 on a polyptych for a Pisan church. At an unknown date it was dismembered, the panels scattered and some lost. The effect of the surviving



8.16. MASACCIO (some areas painted by FILIPPINO LIPPI). *Raising of the Son of Theophilus and the Enthronement of St. Peter.* 1420s; completed early 1480s. Fresco, 7'7" × 19'7" (2.3 × 6 m). Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine.
The third figure from the right, who is staring out at us, is presumed to be a portrait of Masaccio. Masaccio's part in this fresco was completed in thirty-two days. Filippino, who usually spent a full day painting one of the portraits, spent another twenty-two days completing it.

central panel, the *Enthroned Madonna and Child* (fig. 8.17), is so overwhelming that it is a surprise to discover its modest dimensions. The looming monumentality of the Virgin reveals Masaccio's ability to elevate human figures, with all their physical defects, to a level of grandeur and power.

Some of the majesty of the figure doubtless derives from the fact that we read the two-story throne with its Corinthian columns as a work of architecture, imagining gigantic proportions for its occupant by analogy. The influence of Brunelleschi, if not his involvement, is again evident. The Madonna towers above the cornice, her blue



8.17. MASACCIO. *Enthroned Madonna and Child*, from the Pisa polyptych. 1426. Panel, 53¼ × 28¾" (135 × 73 cm). National Gallery, London. Commissioned by Giuliano di Ser Colino degli Scarsi, a notary, for Sta. Maria del Carmine, Pisa.

cloak falling in heavy folds about the bold masses of her shoulders and knees. Perhaps Masaccio made a model throne and a clay figure with cloth arranged over it to chart the behavior of light and shade; we know that this was done by Andrea del Verrocchio and his pupils later in the century. This could help explain the accuracy with which Masaccio has painted the shadows cast on the throne by its projecting wings and by the Virgin herself. The faces conform to a type seen over and over again in Masaccio's work. The Christ Child, now totally nude, is again behaving like a baby, eating the Eucharistic grapes offered him by his mother (see fig. 8.5).

The panel is damaged; here and there passages of paint have broken away, but worse is the overcleaning, which has reduced the face of the Virgin to its underpaint. The throne seems to built of *pietra serena*, the same gray stone used by Brunelleschi. Its details, including the rosettes and the S-shaped strigil ornament (imitated from ancient and medieval sarcophagi still in Pisa; see Nicola Pisano's manger, fig. 2.20), are strongly projected, while the lutes in the hands of the two angels demonstrate how skillfully Masaccio could foreshorten complex objects; this interest in recession and projection of forms in space again evokes the impact of Brunelleschi. The haloes are set parallel to the picture plane with the exception of that of the Christ Child, which is foreshortened in depth. Unless this curious juxtaposition of the planar and the foreshortened has a meaning not yet discovered, it endures as an example of the transitional nature of painting during the 1420s.

In designing the *Crucifixion* (fig. 8.18), which formed the central pinnacle of the altarpiece, Masaccio seems to have started by determining the spot where the observer must stand to see the figures and forms correctly. The cross, for example, is seen from below, and the body of Christ is foreshortened upward, with the collarbones projecting in silhouette. The face inclines forward, looking down into the upturned face of the spectator, as does the figure of God the Father above Donatello's *St. George* niche (see fig. 7.13). The gold background may have been stipulated by the patron, but the sense of mass and space created by Masaccio is so convincing that the gold no longer seems completely flat; it sinks into the distance to become an illusion of golden air behind the figures. The bush growing from the top of the cross once contained a pelican striking her breast to feed her young, a medieval symbol for the sacrifice of Christ.

The sacrifice is Masaccio's theme, rather than the historical incident, which is here reduced to four figures. The Magdalen prostrates herself before the cross, her arms thrown wide, while John the Evangelist, wrapped in grief, seems to shrink into himself. Masaccio's Mary stands with dignity under the cross, her hands folded in prayer. Christ,

pale in death, his eyes closed and the crown of thorns low upon his brow, seems to be suffering still. The *Christus triumphans* of the twelfth century, the *Christus patiens* of the Duecento, and the *Christus mortuus* of Giotto and his
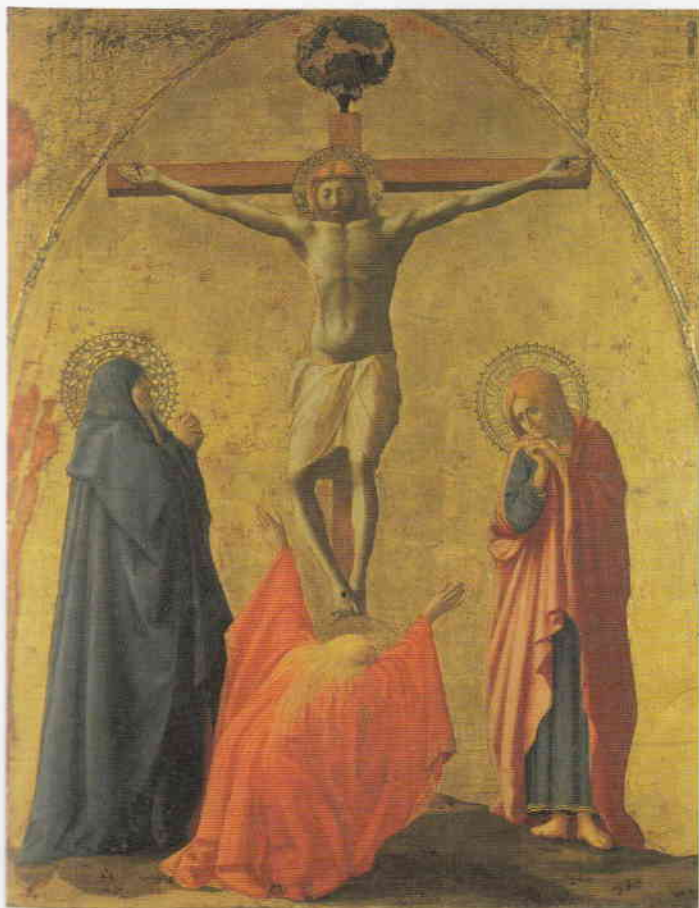
followers in the Trecento are fused and transfigured by Masaccio's new humane vision. And in these four small figures, Masaccio achieves a drama of Aeschylean simplicity and power. All the grandeur of the Brancacci frescoes is here in miniature—all the beauty of light on the folds of drapery, all the breadth of anatomical masses, all the strength and sweetness of color. And nowhere more than in this panel did Masaccio's style deserve the characterization given it in the later Quattrocento, when it was praised for being: "puro, senza ornato" ("pure, without ornament").

The epic breadth of Masaccio's art is maintained even in the predellas. The *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 8.19) may represent Masaccio's comment on the profusion of Gentile's Strozzi altarpiece (see fig. 8.2), painted only three years before, although the interval seems more like fifty. Masaccio has adopted an eye-level point of view. He fills the foreground with figures and then creates behind them a landscape of simple masses that recedes with more spatial conviction than the splendid miscellany of Gentile's world. The distant bay and promontories suggest the sea coast near Pisa; the barren land masses may be based on the eroded region called Le Balze, near the Pisan fortress city of Volterra. The low viewpoint allows Masaccio to compose a magnificent pattern of masses and spaces using legs, both human and equine, and the flat shadows cast by these legs on the ground. Masaccio's soberly clad kings arrive with only six attendants before the humble shed. The vividly portrayed patron, Giuliano di Ser Colino, and his son stand in contemporary costume just behind the kings, the patterns of their cloaks a part of the structure of the composition. Masaccio's interest in foreshortening is evident everywhere: note, for example, the ox, ass, and saddle, all turned at various angles to the eye and therefore differently foreshortened, or the white horse who lifts one hind hoof gently and turns his head so that we can just



*Above:* 8.18. MASACCIO. *Crucifixion,* from the summit of the Pisa polyptych. 1426. Panel, 30¼ × 25¼" (77 × 64 cm). Museo di Capodimonte, Naples.



8.19. MASACCIO. *Adoration of the Magi,* from the predella of the Pisa polyptych. 1426. Panel, 8¼ × 24" (21 × 61 cm). Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

discern his beautiful right eye. Another example is the groom at the extreme right who leans over toward us.

The same spatial principle is turned to dramatic effect in the *Crucifixion of St. Peter* (fig. 8.20). This subject had presented difficulties for artists because St. Peter, to avoid irreverent comparison with Christ, had insisted on being crucified upside down. Masaccio meets the problem by underscoring it; the diagonals of Peter's legs are repeated in the shapes of the two pylons, which seem to have been based on the ancient Pyramid of Gaius Cestius in Rome. Between the pyramids, the cross is locked into the composition. Within the small remaining space the executioners loom toward us with tremendous force as they hammer in the nails. Peter's halo, upside down, is shown in perfect foreshortening.

**THE TRINITY FRESCO.** What may be Masaccio's most mature work is the fresco representing the central mystery of Christian doctrine, the *Trinity* (fig. 8.21), in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. To create the setting for the *Trinity*, Masaccio painted a magnificent Renaissance chapel. Its Corinthian pilasters and Ionic half-columns flanking a coffered barrel vault conform so closely to the architecture of Brunelleschi and are projected so accurately in terms of his perspective principles that Brunelleschi almost certainly must be credited with the design of this architectural illusion. The details of the capitals are

painted with a precision atypical of Masaccio, further suggesting that in this area he had some assistance. In the narrow space in front of the pilasters kneel a man and woman; these portraits of the donors seem so specific that they must have been easily identifiable when they were first painted.

Below the illusionistic chapel is a skeleton bearing the epitaph: "Io fu gia quel che voi siete e quel chio son voi anco sarete" ("I was once what you are, and what I am, you also will be"). The configuration of skeleton and text with the religious imagery above is obviously related to tomb iconography. As part of a funerary monument, the fresco would have been related to an altar where Mass could be said for the deceased. Such an altar table may have been installed in the space between the skeleton and the *Trinity*.

While the patron and his wife are decisively placed in front of the enframing architecture to suggest that they exist within our space, the tomb enclosing the skeleton is painted to suggest that it exists partly in our space but is also partly recessed into the wall; by occupying both realms the skeleton reinforces the words of the inscription. The skeleton alludes not to the patron but to Adam, over whose tomb it was believed Christ had been crucified. Thus the fresco makes reference both to the original sin of Adam and Eve and to the redemptive power of Christ's Crucifixion.
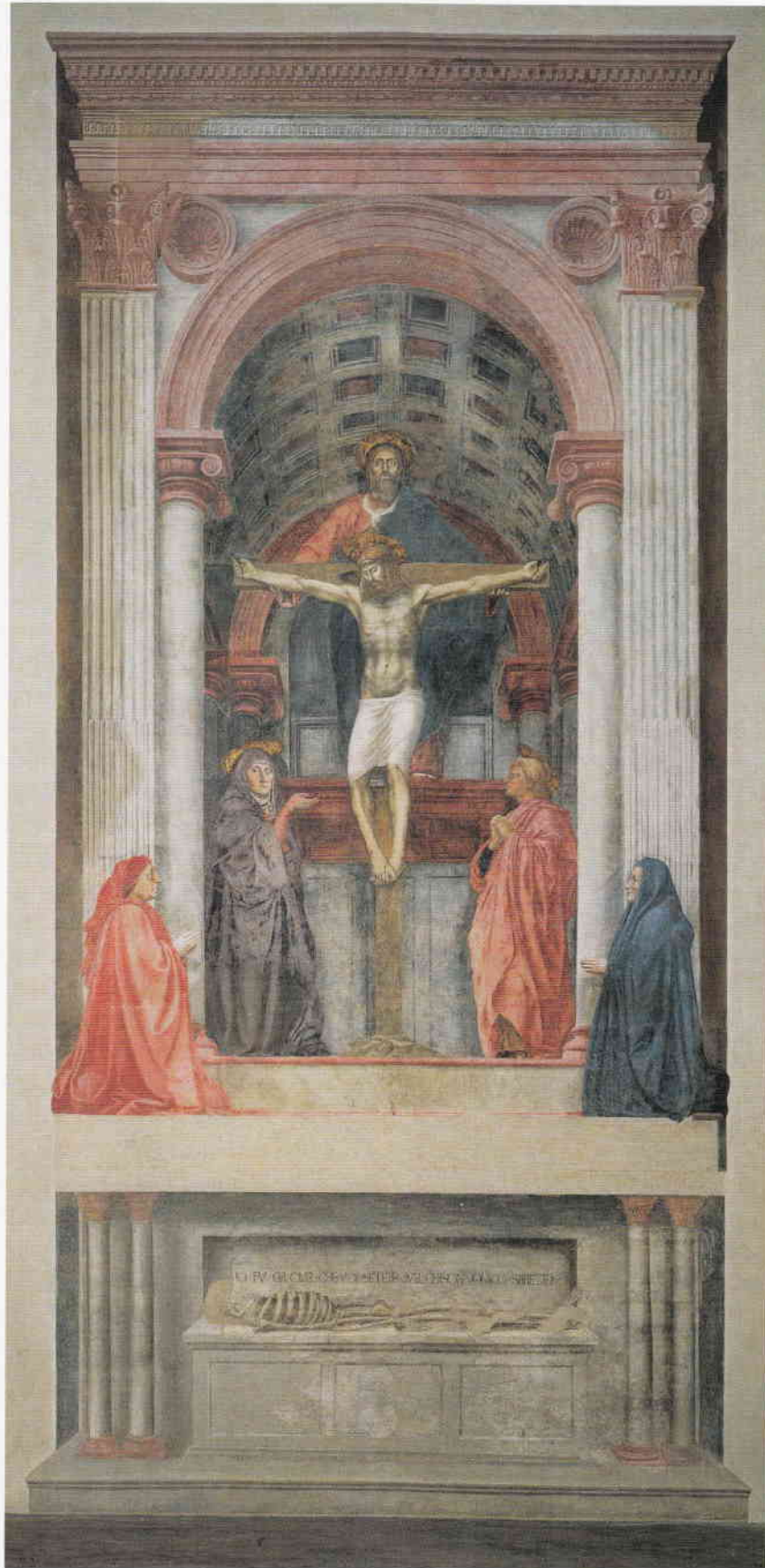
**8.21. MASACCIO.** *Trinity with Mary, John the Evangelist, and Two Donors.* c. 1426–27. Fresco, 21' × 10'5" (6.4 × 3.17 m, including base). Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. It has recently been suggested that Masaccio's fresco was part of a funerary complex dedicated to Berto di Bartolomeo di Berto and his family, the Berti. The *giornate* reveal that this fresco was painted in twenty-seven or twenty-eight days.

Within the illusionistic chapel, Masaccio has shown Golgotha reduced to symbolic terms—the sacrifice of Christ as carried out through the will of the Father, who stands on a kind of shelf toward the back of the chapel, gazing fixedly outward and steadying the cross with his hands. The figure of Christ is a *Christus mortuus* who seems to have endured pain and is now past suffering; he may be based on a wooden sculpture of the crucified Christ made by Brunelleschi about 1412–13 and also in Santa Maria Novella. The dove of the Holy Spirit flies between the heads of Father and Son. Below the cross, Mary does not look at her son but raises her hand to urge us to contemplate his sacrifice. She is somber and determined, with no hint of the elegance or beauty with which she is sometimes endowed. St. John seems lost in adoration before the mystery. The portraits of the kneeling man and woman are stoically calm. Here Calvary has been stripped of its terrors. The kneeling Florentines pray to Mary and John, who intercede with Christ; Christ in turn atones for the sins of all humanity.

The pyramidal composition of figures ascends from the mortals in our sphere, outside the arch, to God at its apex. The perspective of the coffered vault above, on the other hand, moves in the opposite direction to converge behind the lightly painted mound of Golgotha at the base of the cross, at exactly eye level. The ascending and descending pyramids intersect in the body of Christ. In its reduction to geometric essentials that unite figures and architecture, forms and spaces, the composition could hardly be more closely knit. Its power embodies the humanist Giannozzo Manetti's contention that the truths of the Christian religion are as clear as the axioms of mathematics. The composition suggests that the Trinity is the root of all being.

Within the imposing structure, the individual parts are powerfully projected to suggest three-dimensionality and a sense of mass. Details of arms, hands, and architecture reveal startling effects of three-dimensionality. Even the nails that impale Christ's hands are painted to align with the perspective scheme. The surface is rendered with remarkable breadth and freedom. We can only speculate what Masaccio might have accomplished had he lived longer. When informed of his death, Brunelleschi is reported to have said, "Noi abbiamo fatto una gran perdita" ("We have had a great loss").

## Popular Devotion and Prints

The works of Masaccio represent a new and revolutionary departure in the history of art, breaking decisively with the Gothic style and providing a new simplicity and bold naturalism that was influential. While some of Masaccio's documented works are lost, including the panoramic fresco of the consecration of Santa Maria del Carmine that included portraits of many contemporary Florentines, and others were damaged, enough works survive to enable art historians to reconstruct his career and establish his significance. This is not always the case. Only infrequently, for example, have the relatively inexpensive artworks created for the middle and lower classes survived. When they do, the artists who created them usually remain unidentified. One rare example of the prints that circulated widely during this period is the *Madonna del Fuoco*, the "Madonna of the Fire," a woodblock print that is so named because it survived a 1429 house fire and, as a result, became a relic in the local cathedral in Forlì, north of Florence (fig. 8.22). The owner of the house is documented as Brusi da Ripetrosa, a schoolteacher, providing proof that even a person of modest means could afford such a devotional object. While only a handful of authentic prints from this period survive, the fifteenth-century representation of woodblock prints pinned or pasted to the wall attests to their popularity and widespread use.

The artist who created the *Madonna del Fuoco*, probably considered an artisan by his contemporaries, is unknown, as is the Italian locale of the print's creation. The central image of the Madonna and Child, however, has a boldness and simplicity that can be compared with the style of Masaccio. There is little interest here in the elegant draperies and curving lines of the International Gothic because clarity and the ability to identify the subject were foremost in the artist's mind. The decorative framework is minimal (note the rounded arch above the Madonna) and the iconography is direct: it encompasses the major themes of the crowned Madonna holding the Child and the Annunciation and Crucifixion. These last two are depicted as if represented in a fresco cycle, with the Annunciation divided on the arch framing the Crucifixion; whether this might be a reference to a specific location is uncertain. The large sun and moon that flank the Madonna are popular Marian symbols. The twenty-two male and female saints who crowd the sides and the predella below—including John the Baptist, Christopher (patron saint of travelers), Francis, and Jerome—provide a series of intercessors useful for the worshipper in different situations.

This rare surviving example of an inexpensive work intended for popular devotion is a reminder of the many gaps in our knowledge about the Renaissance. We know much more about the role of visual culture in the lives of members of the elite such as the Brancacci and Strozzi and of those who lived in monastic communities such as the Carmelites than about the role images played in the lives of the vast majority of the population.

8.22. ITALIAN. *Madonna del Fuoco*. Before 1429. Woodcut colored by hand, 19³/₁₆ × 15³/₄" (49 × 40 cm). Cathedral, Forlì. The Madonna del Fuoco is the patron saint of the city of Forlì.

9.1. FRA ANGELICO. *Annunciation and Scenes from the Life of the Virgin.* c. 1432–34. Panel, 5'3" × 5'11" (1.6 × 1.8 m). Museo Diocesano, Cortona. Commissioned as the high altar for the church of San Domenico in Cortona. The frame is original.

# THE HERITAGE OF MASACCIO: FRA
# ANGELICO AND FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

Masaccio undisputedly created a new style of painting, but in 1428 his influence was neither as immediate nor as far-reaching as that of his sculptural contemporaries. The Florentine situation was unlike today's, where artists must compete to stay up to date in a market that has no interest in yesterday's ideas. It would be more fitting to compare Florence with Paris in the 1880s, when the paintings by the Impressionist avant-garde were bought only by a few, and conservative historical, classicistic, and genre painters still ran the salons and held the loyalty of the public. The Gothic style, for example, continued in Florentine painting through the 1430s and into the 1440s and 1450s. Altarpieces with gold backgrounds, pointed arches, tracery, and pinnacles were commissioned and executed in quantity, as if Masaccio had never lived. He had no close followers, but his ideas bore fruit in the paintings of two artists who seem younger only because they survived him by decades—Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi—and in the work of others born before Masaccio or a decade or so later. In the output of these two painters, and in the mature creations of Ghiberti and Donatello, we can watch the early Quattrocento stylistic heritage being transformed into something approaching a common style.

The artists of the 1430s–1450s lived in and worked in a society that was changing from the defensively republican Florence of the first third of the Quattrocento. Although threats from outside continued until 1454, when the Peace of Lodi put an end to external warfare for forty years, the political and territorial independence of Florence was no longer threatened. But its republican integrity was more fragile, and by mid-century the oligarchic state, in whose government the artisan class was permitted at least token participation, survived in name only. Political and eco-

nomic rivalry had led to the expulsion of Cosimo de' Medici from Florence in 1433. He left as a private citizen, but he returned in 1434 and became to all intents and purposes lord of Florence. Cosimo and his descendants seldom held office, but they maintained power by manipulating the lotteries that governed the "election" of officials. Until the second expulsion of the family in 1494, the Florentine Republic was in effect a Medici principality, and Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo treated foreign sovereigns as equals.

Paradoxically, this period encompassed the decline of the Florentine banking houses, including that of the Medici, but it also saw the establishment of a new social and intellectual aristocracy among the Medici and their supporters. These humanistically oriented patrons commissioned buildings, statues, portraits, and altarpieces in the new classicizing style, and the elegance of Augustan Rome replaced the rougher republican virtues seen in the works of Masaccio, Nanni di Banco, and the early Donatello. Although sumptuary laws still forbade luxury and display in personal adornment, the palace and villas of the Medici established a new level of luxury and conspicuous consumption that had a powerful effect on the arts.

The religious life of Florence during this period was dominated by Antonio Pierozzi (1389–1459), who joined the Dominican Order in 1405 and served as Archbishop of Florence from 1446 until his death. He was canonized in the sixteenth century as St. Antoninus of Florence. A man of blameless personal life, he allowed the revenues of his archdiocese to accumulate while he lived in a simplicity unexpected in the mid-Quattrocento. Except on ceremonial occasions, he wore a threadbare Dominican habit. A zealous reformer and compelling preacher and writer, St. Antoninus also served as an ambassador for the Florentine Republic. His *Summa theologica* and *Summa confessionalis* were not published until after his death, but his ideas

were well known through his preaching, and his theories of symbolism and morality will frequently be cited in the pages that follow. For the sake of convenience he will here be referred to as St. Antoninus, although he was not elevated to sainthood until the sixteenth century.

At this juncture, it is convenient to examine the works of the two monks Fra Angelico (late 1390s–1455) and Fra Filippo Lippi (c. 1406–1469). Their names were mentioned in a letter written from Perugia in 1438 by the painter Domenico Veneziano to Piero the Gouty, son and eventual successor of Cosimo de' Medici. Trying to obtain a commission in Florence, Domenico listed Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo as the most important painters of the day and reported that both were overwhelmed with commissions. In their roughly parallel development we can see the emergence of the new Renaissance style.

Giovanni da Fiesole, born Guido di Pietro, became a monk and is known to us as Fra Angelico ("the Angelic Friar"). He has long been called Beato ("Blessed") Angelico by the Italians, though he was not actually beatified until 1983. Fra Filippo Lippi, on the other hand, was a monk who fathered two children by a nun. Although Fra Filippo had a personal and visible connection with Masaccio, we know little for certain about his early style. We discuss Fra Angelico first because he was the leading painter of Florence in the 1430s, and it was he who interpreted Masaccio's work in a form that exercised a profound and lasting influence on Renaissance art.

## Fra Angelico

In 1417 the artist we know as Fra Angelico was documented as the painter Guido di Pietro. In 1423 he is first mentioned as Fra Giovanni da Fiesole. He was probably born in the late 1390s and was in his fifties when he died in 1455. For more than a generation, he worked as an artist in the service of the Dominican Order, first at San Domenico in Fiesole and then at San Marco in Florence under the priorate of St. Antoninus, whom he eventually succeeded as prior. Even before his death, he was extolled as "the angelic painter," a description that led to the name by which he is popularly known today.

The earliest fully Renaissance painting by Fra Angelico is his *Descent from the Cross* (fig. 9.2). This work had originally been commissioned by Palla Strozzi from Lorenzo Monaco, and was intended for his burial chapel in the Sacristy of Santa Trinita, where its subject would complement Gentile's *Adoration of the Magi* (see fig. 8.2) in the same chapel. Lorenzo completed only the pinnacles before his death in 1425, and the unfinished work was later given over to Fra Angelico. The painting of the central panel may have been started in the late 1420s or

early 1430s and was almost certainly finished by November 1434, when Cosimo de' Medici returned to Florence and members of the opposition party, including Palla Strozzi, were exiled.

At first sight, the artist seems to have been hampered by the pre-existing frame, but then we realize that Fra Angelico has exploited the Gothic arches, utilizing the central panel for the cross and ladders and the side arches to frame the cityscape of Jerusalem on the left and a rocky landscape on the right. This monastic painter presents us with a world in which every shape is clear, every color bright and sparkling. Christ is gently lowered from the cross by John, Mary Magdalen, and others and mourned by groups gathered to either side. On the right stands a group of men in contemporary Florentine dress; one, wearing a red *cappuccio*, holds the nails and the crown of thorns, as if to encourage meditation. Both he and the young man kneeling in adoration are characterized as *beati* by gold rays emanating from their heads.

The figures, grouped on a flowering lawn, are united by their devotion to the crucified Christ, whose body is depicted with Fra Angelico's characteristic emotional restraint and grace, emphasizing beauty rather than suffering. One barely notices the bruises on Christ's torso or the blood on his forehead. Instead, attention is concentrated on the quiet face and on the light that emphasizes the silky surfaces of hair and beard.

Fra Angelico stylizes distant Jerusalem as an array of multicolored geometric shapes. The storm cloud that darkened the sky during the Crucifixion still casts a shadow over some of the city. On the right side, trees provide a loose screen through which we look into a hilly Tuscan landscape punctuated by towns, villages, farmhouses, castles, and villas under a sky filled with soft clouds.

The *Descent from the Cross* was a milestone. At this time, no painter in Europe except the Flemish artist Jan van Eyck could surpass Angelico's control of the resources of the new naturalism, and none could match the monumental harmony of figures and landscape he created here.

Fra Angelico's splendid *Annunciation* altarpiece (fig. 9.1) was painted for the church of San Domenico in the Tuscan town of Cortona. The setting is a portico of Corinthian columns that divide the panel into thirds—two defined by the arches of his portico, the third occupied by three receding arches and a garden. The angel enters the portico, bowing and genuflecting before Mary, who is seated on a chair draped with gold brocade. Directly above her head, in the shadows under the star-studded ceiling, the dove of the Holy Spirit appears surrounded by a golden light. A sculpted representation of the prophet Isaiah looks down from the spandrel between the arches. Behind the angel's head, through a doorway and past a partially

9.2. FRA ANGELICO. *Descent from the Cross.* Probably completed 1434. Panel, 9' × 9'4" (2.75 × 2.85 m). Museum of S. Marco, Florence. Frame and pinnacles by Lorenzo Monaco. c. 1420–22. Commissioned by Palla Strozzi.

drawn curtain, we can see into Mary's bedchamber. The interaction between Gabriel and Mary is made clear in the texts that course between them. The upper and lower texts are summaries of Gabriel's greeting: above, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28); and, below, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35). These two texts can be read from left to right. In response, Mary abandons her book to cross her hands on her chest in acceptance of her destiny, replying, in the center text, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). This response is written in reverse, from Mary to the angel, and also upside down, apparently so that it can be read by higher powers. The garden at the left, a symbol of Mary's virginity, is included in a number of Quattrocento Annunciations and even some Cinquecento examples. It illustrates the words of the Song of Songs: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse" (4:12). St. Antoninus had connections with the Dominican community in Cortona, and already in this early work Fra Angelico follows his doctrine of the "garden of the soul," a set of meditations for penitents written in Italian. Fra Angelico also identifies the garden with Eden, for at the upper left the weeping figures of Adam and Eve are being gently but firmly expelled. This association is natural since, according to St. Paul, Christ is the second Adam, Mary the second Eve. Angelico avoided the drama seen in Masaccio's *Expulsion*

(see fig. 8.13), and also the nudity, clothing Adam and Eve in the coats of skins made for them by God (Genesis 3:21).

Fra Angelico was certainly aware of Masaccio's method of constructing forms and spaces, but he limits his *chiaroscuro* as firmly as he does the emotion he allows his figures to express. Their slender limbs are only just discernible under their garments and their bodies seem barely corporeal. Their faces are drawn with simplicity and purity, and they have exquisitely tended blond hair and healthy rosy cheeks. The poised shapes, the subtle contours, and the harmonies of space and light are enhanced by the freshness of the colors. The angel, with wings seemingly made of beaten gold, is dressed in a tunic of clear, bright vermilion with bands of golden embroidery. Mary's blue mantle contrasts with the sparkling folds of the cloth-of-honor that hangs behind her, as do the snowy columns with the richly veined marble of the floor and the flowery lawn. The world Fra Angelico creates is remote from reality, a realm of unmarred celestial beauty.

In the predella scenes, however, the real world intrudes. In the *Visitation* (fig. 9.3), looking past Mary and her cousin, we see an old woman laboring up the hill toward us. Beyond her spreads a broad landscape, its distance enhanced by shadows of clouds. Mary "went into the hill country with haste," wrote Luke in his Gospel (1:39), and St. Antoninus's *Summa* stressed that this subject, which marks the first recognition of the divinity of Christ—the response of John the Baptist while he was still in the womb of Elizabeth—should have a hilly background. The background elements are identifiable as the town of Castiglione Fiorentino, the tower of Montecchi (still visible to travelers between Florence and Rome), and the wide lake that then filled the Chiana Valley below Cortona (see fig. 16.4). This may well be the earliest recognizable representation of a specific place in the Renaissance. Beyond the sun-drenched town, the plain fuses with the sky in imperceptible gradations of summer sunlight and dusty haze. The spatial experience of landscape is realized more fully in this tiny panel than in any previous Italian work.

In 1436, the neglected buildings of San Marco in Florence were taken from the religious order previously there and presented to the Dominicans of Fiesole. Beginning in 1438, the Dominicans, supported by contributions from Cosimo de' Medici, commissioned Michelozzo di Bartolommeo to build a new church and monastery on the site (see fig. 6.27). Pope Eugenius IV was present at the consecration of the church on January 6, 1443, under the new prior, the future St. Antoninus. Fra Angelico painted the high altarpiece, which was probably installed by 1440 (fig. 9.4). In this work the artist showed himself to be abreast of the latest artistic developments.

The altarpiece has been dismembered and the original frame lost; the reconstruction shown here represents an effort to re-create some of the effect of the original. What cannot be remedied is the fact that the principal panel has been drastically overcleaned. Nevertheless, it is still an impressive composition. Gold curtains, their loops continued across the top of the picture by festoons of pink and white roses, seem to have just been parted to invite us to view the court of heaven. At the center, where the perspective lines converge, the Virgin is enthroned in a Renaissance niche whose Corinthian order is so closely related to Brunelleschi's new style (and to Michelozzo's adaptation of that style at San Marco) that one of the architects may



9.3. FRA ANGELICO. *Visitation*, from the predella of the *Annunciation* altarpiece (fig. 9.1). c. 1434. Panel, approx. 9 × 15" (23 × 38 cm). Museo Diocesano, Cortona.

9.4. FRA ANGELICO. *Madonna and Saints* (San Marco altarpiece). c. 1438–43. Conjectural reconstruction of the front and sides. Digitized reconstruction by Lew Minter, after Boskovits-Brown. Central panel, $86^5/_8 \times 89^3/_8$" (2.2 × 2.27 m). Museum of S. Marco, Florence. Commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici for the high altar of S. Marco, Florence.

Because the frame of this altarpiece is lost, this illustration uses computerized photomontage in an attempt to re-create the effect of the original altarpiece in a Quattrocento frame. With this frame in place, the illusionism of the gathered curtains to the sides and garland swags across the top takes on a new effectiveness.

have shown Fra Angelico how such things should be designed. The Christ Child, seated as the Divine Ruler, holds a prominent orb painted with a world map with the Holy Land at its center, marked by a gold star. Gold brocades decorate the throne and create a wall over which one looks into the next level of the illusion, an "enclosed garden" of fruit trees, cedars and cypresses, palms and roses. These choices are not merely decorative, for Christ is the fruit of the Tree of Life, and Mary—according to symbolism derived from the apocryphal Book of Wisdom—is a cedar of Lebanon, a cypress on Zion, a palm in Cades, and a rose tree in Jericho. The texts inscribed on the Virgin's mantle are: "I am the mother of beautiful love … and of holy hope" and "Like a vine I caused loveliness to bud, and my blossoms became glorious and abundant fruit." The garden in the background is both the representation and the symbol of these words. Angels and saints

gather in a semicircle on the steps of the throne and on an Anatolian animal carpet that provides the converging orthogonals of the perspective construction. The carpet seems to be precisely rendered, but in fact its border features the red *palle*, or balls, of the coat of arms of the monastery's patron, Cosimo de' Medici; either this is an interpolation on Angelico's part, to honor his patron, or the Medici had such a rug woven to their specifications.

In the foreground, the composition in space is continued by the kneeling Medici patron saints, Cosmas and Damian, and completed by what seems to be a small panel of the Crucifixion, a picture within a picture. This illusionistic device is based on the custom of placing an image of the Crucifixion or the dead Christ on the altar while saying Mass. When no such image appeared in the altarpiece, a small panel like the one painted here would have to be brought from the sacristy. In this case Fra Angelico's

illusion is clever, for it provides the required image while adding another grace note to his highly developed spatial composition.

The representation of a unified grouping of figures within an integrated, continuous, illusionistic space as seen here was new to Renaissance painting. Although we cannot determine who the innovator was, there is no question that Fra Angelico and his Medici patrons were in the forefront of these developments. With its perspective construction, lofty central arched throne, and pyramidal grouping of figures within a circle in depth, the altarpiece establishes a precedent that may have been an impetus for the many other centralized, multifigural compositions created in subsequent decades of the Quattrocento. The work's influence may have been augmented by its Medici patronage, which certainly added prestige to this innovative work.

The pictorial space, measured by systematic perspective from the foreground plane to the horizon beyond the trees, provides a location and the correct scale for each figure. The space is projected by dividing the lower edge using the squares in the carpet, then drawing orthogonals from these segments to the vanishing point. One of the kneeling saints turns and looks outward as he points with his right hand, directing our attention to the center of the picture. The use of these two devices—the perspective scheme and the agent who invites us to contemplate the theme—corresponds, as we shall see, to the doctrines of Leonbattista Alberti, who had arrived in Florence a few years earlier and circulated *Della pittura*, the Italian version of his treatise *De pictura* (*On Painting*).

In the predella panels, featuring the legend of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, Fra Angelico displayed his versatility in handling both figures and the luminous and atmospheric effects of the natural world. Dominican high altarpieces rarely have predellas, and the inclusion here of this cycle, instantly recognizable as Medicean, reveals the influence of the patron in determining iconography, even in public religious works. At first sight, the interiors seem to be standard Trecento boxes. *The Miracle of the Deacon Justinian* (fig. 9.5) shows the two saints floating on clouds as they exchange the deacon's gangrenous leg for a healthy one amputated from a Moor. The space is illuminated naturally by light coming in from the front left, so that a shadow is cast across the right wall. A second source of light is the tiny window on the left wall, through which light filters onto the splayed embrasure. A third source is the light reflected upward from the floor, and there is a fourth source in the corridor visible through the open door. In the interplay of the effects of light from four different sources on walls, furniture, curtains, figures, and still life (note the slippers, beaker, and carafe), and in the delicacy with which light suffuses the shadows, Fra Angelico reveals his subtle observation of natural effects.

Between the end of 1438 and late 1445, when he left for Rome, Fra Angelico and his assistants—probably also monks—provided paintings for the monastery of San Marco's chapter house, corridors, and overdoors, and for forty-four monks' cells (fig. 9.6). The painters were certainly under the direction of the prior, St. Antoninus, and the style of their paintings for the monastic community



9.5. FRA ANGELICO. *The Miracle of the Deacon Justinian*, from the predella of the S. Marco altarpiece (fig. 9.4). c. 1438–43. Panel, 14½ × 18¾" (37 × 48 cm). Museum of S. Marco, Florence.

**9.6. MICHELOZZO DI BARTOLOMMEO.** Plan of the second floor of the Monastery of S. Marco, Florence. 1442–44.

1. The Library, by Michelozzo (see fig. 6.27).
2. Location of fresco of the *Annunciation* in the hallway, at the top of the entrance stairs (see fig. 9.7).
3. Location of monk's cell with fresco of the *Annunciation* (see fig. 9.8).
4. Location of the double cell reserved for Cosimo de' Medici, with fresco of the *Procession and Adoration of the Magi* by the workshop of Fra Angelico.
5. Location of the double cell used by Savonarola (see pp. 342–344) when he was the prior of San Marco.
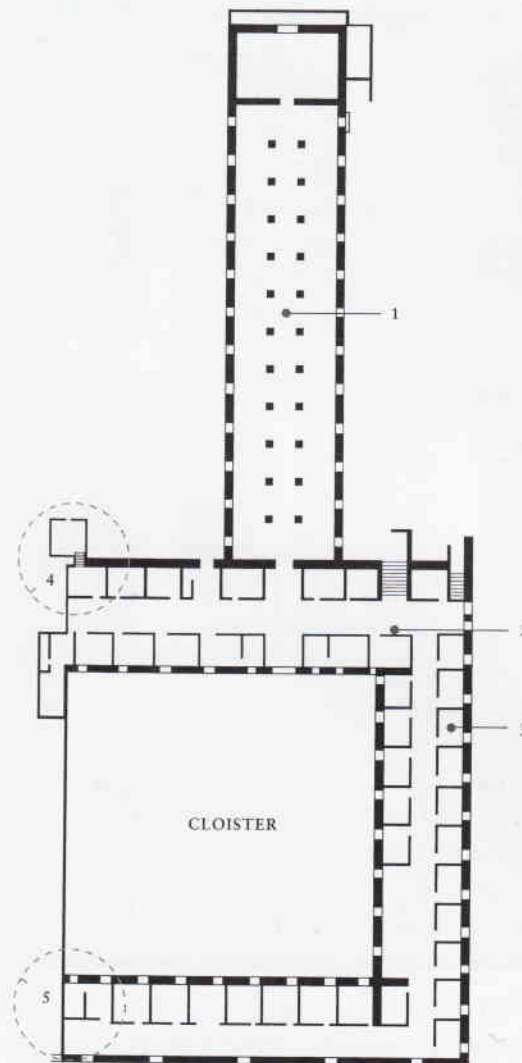
differs sharply from that of Angelico's altarpieces intended for public view. There is even a distinction between the frescoes destined for the monastic community as a whole and those in the cells—a reminder of how an artist and his *bottega* could modify style and iconographic interpretations according to location and audience.

At the head of the staircase leading into the dormitory, which every monk must have used several times a day, Fra Angelico painted an *Annunciation* (fig. 9.7) with the inscription, "As you venerate this figure of the intact Virgin while passing before it, beware lest you omit to say a Hail Mary." Uncertain in date, the inscription nevertheless provides a hint of the role of images in the rituals of monastic life. Another clue to monastic behavior can be seen in a fresco of the Dominican saint Peter Martyr over the door leading from the cloister to the adjoining church: the saint has his finger raised in the traditional gesture of silence, reminding the monks that, though they could speak in the cloister, they had to fall silent upon entering the church.

Fra Angelico's interest in natural light is evident in this *Annunciation*, for when the monks ascended the staircase to the upper floor, only after a turn in the staircase would they see the painting, at a point where light floods in from a large window to the left that conforms to the painted light within the picture. As is appropriate for both the

fresco medium and the monastic setting, the bright colors and gold of the *Annunciation* altarpiece (see fig. 9.1) are here replaced by pale tints. The architecture is now seen directly from the front, so that the lateral columns recede toward the center of the composition, drawing the viewer's eye from left to right. The greater weight of the columns and the care with which the capitals are rendered probably reveal the painter's interest in Michelozzo's architecture, then being constructed all about him. It is doubtful, however, that an architect would have approved of using Corinthian and Ionic capitals in the same portico.

The mood here is less immediate and more contemplative than in the ecstatic Cortona *Annunciation*. Mary has no book and she sits on a rough-hewn, three-legged wooden stool. The fence around her "garden of the soul," as it was called by St. Antoninus, is higher and stronger. Her chamber, stripped of furniture, opens onto the world through a barred window, and one is reminded of St. Antoninus's admonition to sweep clean the room of the

9.7. FRA ANGELICO. *Annunciation*. 1438–45. Fresco, 7'1" × 10'6"
(2.2 × 3.2 m). Hallway, Monastery of S. Marco, Florence. Probably
commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici.

mind and to distrust the eye, the window of the soul:
"Deadly sin comes in at the windows, if they are not closed
as they ought to be," was his warning in discussing the
theme of the Annunciation. Angelico has made the
window the eye of his fresco, the vanishing point of his
perspective lines.

Each of the arched frescoes in the cells is about 6 feet
high and each seems to float on the wall under a curving
vault. Everything in these images is pure, clean, and dis-
embodied. The world seems to retreat, leaving the medita-
tive subject suspended before the cell's occupant. The cell
version of the *Annunciation* (fig. 9.8) shows a standing
angel and a kneeling Virgin, slight and frail, who holds her
open book to her breast. The angel has entered with the
light, which falls on the Virgin. They are united by the
simple rhythms of the plain architecture, which is arched
like the cell it adorns. There is no garden, and outside the
arcade St. Peter Martyr meditates on the event. He is
included ahistorically as an example for the cell's resident

monk who, under the hypnotic influence of the luminous
colors, clear shapes, harmonious spaces, and simple com-
position, is expected to experience mystically the miracle
of the Incarnation.

Through their austere colors and simplified shapes, the
cell frescoes suggest that no worldly concerns should
trouble the spirit. In each painting, however, Fra Angelico
and his assistants also probed the sensibilities of the indi-
vidual observer, as Donatello had done in his sculpture (see
figs. 7.12, 7.17). In these frescoes the observer is the center,
as is also the effect in works that demonstrate the Renais-
sance perspective system. In this sense these paintings are
fully Renaissance works.

9.8. FRA ANGELICO. *Annunciation*. 1438–45. Fresco, 6'1½" ×
5'2" (1.87 × 1.58 m). Monk's cell, Monastery of S. Marco, Florence.
Probably commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici.

# Fra Filippo Lippi

Filippo Lippi was born about 1406 into the large family of an impoverished butcher in the poor neighborhood near the monastery of the Carmine in Florence. Together with a brother, he entered the monastery at an early age and took his vows in 1421. Giorgio Vasari reported that Filippo decided to become a painter while watching Masaccio at work in the Brancacci Chapel. The mistake of Filippo becoming a monk was compounded by his appointment to the chaplaincy of a convent in Prato where, according to Vasari, a young nun named Lucrezia Buti drew his attention while he was saying Mass. We know from an anonymous denunciation, made to the Office of the Monasteries and of the Night, that from 1456 to 1458 Lucrezia, her sister Spinetta, and five other nuns were living in Filippo's house. During this period a son, who became the painter Filippino Lippi (see figs. 13.31, 13.33–13.34), was born to Lucrezia; later a daughter was born. There was more trouble: patrons claimed that Filippo did not fulfill his contracts, for example, and an assistant claimed he was not paid. At one point, Filippo found himself in difficulty with the authorities and was tried and tortured on the rack. It is said that Cosimo de' Medici persuaded Pope Pius II to release Filippo and Lucrezia from their vows. They allegedly married and their children were legitimized.

Filippo's earliest dated painting, a *Madonna and Child* (fig. 9.9), shows the influence of Masaccio in the heavy features of the Madonna, the simplicity of the domestic interior, and the heavy shadows. Only the marble throne and pearl diadem seem out of place. The absence of a halo for either of the sacred figures represents a move toward the greater naturalism that will become common later in the Quattrocento. A closer look, however, reveals that Filippo is not interested in the consistency characteristic of Masaccio's style. The heavy drapery is lit erratically, and the interior space seems throttled around the center, although perhaps this effect is the result of the panel having been reduced in size sometime in the past. Filippo's attempt to suggest natural gestures and attitudes seems somewhat forced. The most striking feature of the style, however, is the reappearance of contour. Apparently, Masaccio's *chiaroscuro* did not seem sufficient to Filippo, for around every form he has added hard, drawn edges. The result, less pictorial than sculptural, may indicate Filippo's careful study of figures by Donatello, Nanni, and others.

In his *Annunciation* (fig. 9.10), Filippo established a deep perspective into a monastery garden, at once the garden of the Temple of Solomon (with which Mary was connected) and the symbolic closed garden of the Song of Songs. Mary's agitated pose is probably derived from



9.9. FRA FILIPPO LIPPI. *Madonna and Child* (*Tarquinia Madonna*). 1437. Panel, 45 × 25½" (114 × 65 cm) (cut down at the sides and bottom). National Gallery, Rome, on display at Palazzo Barberini. Perhaps commissioned by Giovanni Vitelleschi, Archbishop of Florence, for his palace in Corneto Tarquinia.

Donatello's slightly earlier *Annunciation* (see fig. 10.21), but the mood of the picture has little to do with that monument to classicism.

The two curly-haired, puffy-faced angels to the left may function as witnesses to this moment of Christ's Incarnation. One looks downward; the other gazes out at the observer and points to the Annunciation, leading our eye into the painting—a device recommended by Alberti and already mentioned in our discussion of the works of Fra Angelico. The tones of the drapery of the foreground figures contrast surprisingly with the brilliant orange

building at the end of the garden. Note the glass vase in the foreground, from which Gabriel has apparently just plucked the lily he holds. Filippo has even painted a niche to suggest that the vase rests on the frame—or perhaps on the altar itself—thereby uniting the real space of the chapel with the illusory space of the picture. With its shining water and soft shadow, the vase contrasts with the expanse of the softly painted garden, with its flowers, trees, arbor, and blue sky beyond. It is the kind of effect one would expect from a Netherlandish rather than an Italian artist, and it may indicate Filippo's awareness of artistic developments north of the Alps.

There must have been a good reason for the unorthodox composition of this *Annunciation*, with the main scene moved into one half so that the rest could be given over to two additional angels not mentioned in biblical accounts of this event. These angels are somewhat distracting, for they look like neighborhood youngsters dressed up with wings, as we know happened at festival occasions. Each year at the Carmine, for example, Filippo could have witnessed a re-enactment of the Ascension of Christ in which the actor who played Christ sailed up through a hole cut in the ceiling in front of the Brancacci Chapel. The Church of San Felice put on a similar annual show, choreographed by Brunelleschi, that dramatized the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel, lowered in a copper mandorla into the midst of the church, moved across a stage in front of the altar and delivered the salutation to Mary, who was waiting in her little habitation. After listening to her reply, he ascended into a blue dome lined with lighted lamps to represent stars
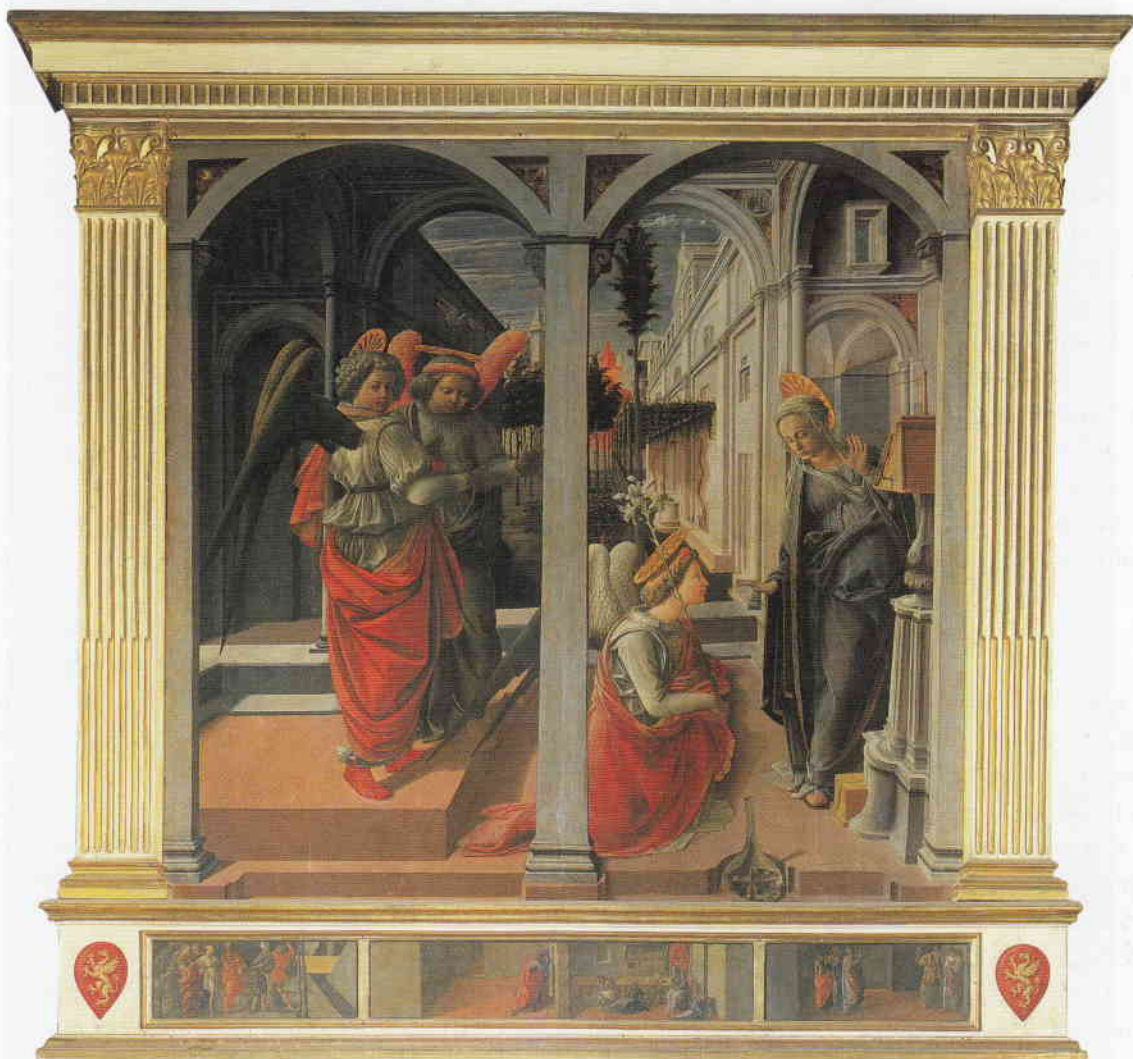


9.10. FRA FILIPPO LIPPI. *Annunciation*. c. 1440. Panel, 5'9" × 6' (1.75 × 1.83 m). 🏛 S. Lorenzo, Florence. Probably commissioned by a member of the Martelli family for their family chapel in San Lorenzo.
Physical evidence and the unusual composition, with the scene of the Annunciation squeezed into one-half of the available space, suggest that the work may have been created as two hinged panels, to function as a kind of diptych.

9.11. FRA FILIPPO LIPPI. *Madonna and Child with the Birth of the Virgin and the Meeting of Joachim and Anna*. 1452. Panel, diameter 53" (1.35 m). Pitti Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Lionardo Bartolini, an important banker and statesman. The frame is original.

and with child-angels standing on clouds of carded wool and held in by iron bars so that they could not fall "even if they wanted to," according to Vasari. The flavor of these popular festivals seems to animate Filippo's paintings.

Filippo's delightful *tondo* (circular picture) of the *Madonna and Child with the Birth of the Virgin and the Meeting of Joachim and Anna* was painted in 1452 for a prosperous merchant (fig. 9.11). The *tondo* is derived in part from the Florentine tradition of painted round trays presented to women as marriage gifts or when they gave birth to a male child (for an earlier example, see fig. 12.3).

On the staircase at the upper right St. Anne, mother of the Virgin, receives the returning Joachim, perhaps a reference to the kiss that, some theologians argued, marked the moment the Virgin was conceived (see fig. 3.7). Then, on the left, the birth of the Virgin is depicted as if it were taking place in the Renaissance house of a well-to-do Florentine family, attended by maidservants carrying gifts. The next generation appears in the central Virgin and Child, who are placed at the focal point of the perspective,

which means that they are off-center in the composition within the *tondo*. The Virgin, who looks shyly out at the observer, was drawn from the same model as other Madonnas by Lippi. The Christ Child holds a pomegranate and is about to pop a seed into his mouth; like Masaccio's grapes (see figs. 8.5, 8.17), this naturalistic motif has a religious meaning, for the pomegranate's many seeds made it a symbol of the Resurrection.

Filippo's interest in creating a complex spatial setting is evident in the planes of the walls, the inlaid marble squares of the floor, the coffered ceilings, and the steps of varying breadth and pitch. The new elegance of mid-Quattrocento taste is seen in the delicacy of the figures and the refinement of costume, especially the Madonna's headdress, with its artfully pleated design. Her blonde hair is combed tightly back. During the Renaissance, a high forehead was considered to be especially beautiful; it could be achieved, if necessary, by plucking or shaving. Filippo's enthusiasm for beautiful young women, healthy babies, tasteful garments, and elegant furnishings is well demonstrated in this

image. Masaccio's *chiaroscuro* has vanished and the figures are illuminated by a soft, allover glow without harsh shadows. As a result, the sense of mass evident in Filippo's earlier works is somewhat reduced.

Fra Filippo's frescoes in the chancel of Prato Cathedral (fig. 9.12), begun in 1452, were executed over a period of time. The date of 1460 is found on one fresco, but the cycle was still incomplete in 1464, when officials complained to Carlo de' Medici that Filippo had not finished the job, and even in 1466, when the painter left for Spoleto. Some of the work was done from Filippo's designs by his pupil, Fra Diamante, but everywhere the cycle overflows with details that show the human sweetness and warmth characteristic of Filippo's art.
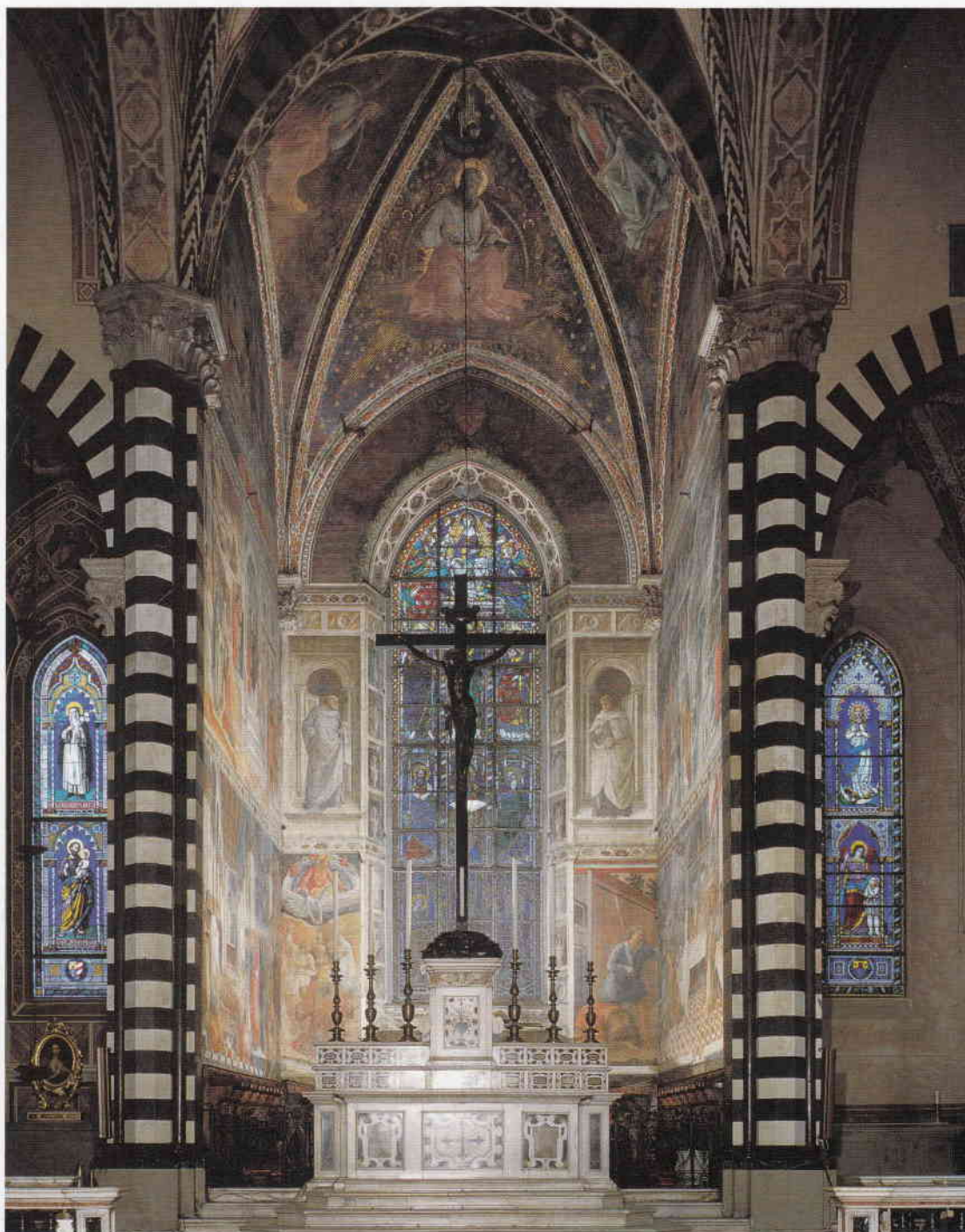


9.12. FRA FILIPPO LIPPI. Fresco cycle with scenes from the legends of Sts. Stephen and John the Baptist. Cathedral of Prato. 1452/3–66. The vault frescoes represent the four Evangelists. The stained-glass window, with standing saints and the *Assumption of the Virgin*, was executed by Ser Lorenzo da Pelago, probably on designs by Lippi. Commissioned by the commune of Prato.

The *Feast of Herod* (fig. 9.13) is a work of great originality. A garden courtyard, floored with inlaid marble in a strong perspective pattern, is the setting for the impressive celebration. The perspective lines shoot inward, past the central figure of Herod, who is seated directly below the coat of arms of the patron, to windows opening onto a landscape. On this stage the action moves in three episodes. At the left, cut off from the festivities by a gigantic, armed guard, Salome receives on a platter the head of St. John the Baptist, from which she looks away. The decapitation itself is painted on the adjoining wall, and the executioner has to reach around the corner to place the head on the platter; his elbow, bent at 90 degrees, conforms to the angle at which the walls meet (fig. 9.14). In the center Salome does her dance, poised on her left foot, while her right foot, hand, and assorted ribbons fly in the air. This figure is the ancestor, so to speak, of the figures in motion painted by Fra Filippo's pupil Sandro Botticelli (see fig. 13.23). At the right Salome kneels, still not looking at the head she presents to Herodias, while at the extreme right two servants clutch each other as one surreptitiously captures a glimpse of the grisly trophy.

Fra Filippo was chosen by the Medici to paint a series of penitential pictures in the late 1450s. In 1448 the plague struck again, and it returned annually for three summers.

Thousands of Florentines succumbed, and the pilgrims passing through Tuscany on their way to the papal jubilee of 1450 in Rome carried the plague with them and died miserably in the streets there. St. Antoninus, at this time archbishop of Florence, may well have been responsible for the content of two similar works painted by Fra Filippo for Lucrezia Tornabuoni, wife of Piero de' Medici: one was for her penitential cell at the monastery of Camaldoli in the Apennines and the other for the altar of the chapel in the Medici Palace (fig. 9.15). St. Antoninus originally composed his moral treatise "on the art of living well" for Lucrezia's sister; a copy written in his own hand for Lucrezia survives.

In Filippo's painting for the Medici Palace, the Virgin kneels and adores the naked Christ Child, following, in part, the description by St. Bridget of Sweden of her vision of the Nativity (see p. 148), suggesting that Filippo's image refers to the moment of the Nativity even when such iconographic details as the cave, shed, Joseph, angels, ox, or ass are missing. God the Father and the dove of the Holy Spirit join the Christ Child in forming the Trinity. Nearby stands St. John the Baptist as a boy of five or six, although, according to tradition, he was only six months older than his cousin Jesus. The setting is the middle of a forest in which many felled trees can be seen. In the lower

left-hand corner an ax wedged into a tree trunk bears the words "Frater Philippus P" (for *pinxit*, meaning painted) on its handle. This is a penitential image derived from the Baptist's own words: "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matthew 3:10).

Since the painting seems to date to about the time of the Lucrezia Buti scandal, Filippo's signature on the ax handle may record his penance. But logging was also an essential daily activity of the monks at Camaldoli, who lived a rigorous existence in clearings they made in the forest. Each monk resided in a separate hut, celebrating solitary Mass and living on what he could raise in his garden plot. Taking the Camaldolites as his theme, St. Antoninus recommended to penitents a life of religious meditation in what he called "the little garden of the soul," very like the garden plot in

which we see Mary kneeling to adore Christ. First one should cut down the trees, he wrote, then uproot the stumps and brambles, then fence in the garden and appoint a guardian for the gate, and only then will the flowers of a good life spring. He also admired St. John the Baptist—the last of the prophets and the first of the martyrs—who went into the wilderness before the age of seven. St. Antoninus claimed that the true penitent will identify with the Virgin, and that through creating the "garden of the soul," the Christ Child can be born again in one's heart.

Filippo's painting is replete with St. Antoninus's dictums. Around Christ, flowers spring up to form a garden protected by saints, while felled and uprooted trees fill the background. Fire comes down from heaven—the fire of the Holy Spirit, with which St. John said Christ would baptize (Matthew 3:11). In the deep blue-green gloom of the forest, Mary and the praying saint—Romuald, founder of the Camaldolite Order—adore Christ.

At this same time, other painters were exploring Masaccio's style and investigating new aspects of the natural world, as we shall see in Chapter 11.



9.14. FRA FILIPPO LIPPI. *The Head of St. John the Baptist Handed to Salome.* 1452/3–66. Fresco. Cathedral, Prato, detail of the *Feast of Herod* (see fig. 9.13).



9.15. FRA FILIPPO LIPPI. *The Adoration of the Infant Jesus.* Late 1450s. Panel, 50 × 45⅝" (1.27 × 1.16 m). Gemäldegalerie, Berlin. Commissioned by a member of the Medici family (Cosimo or Piero de' Medici or perhaps Lucrezia Tornabuoni) for the chapel in the Medici Palace (see fig. 6.22), where an early copy is now on the altar.

## FLORENTINE ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE, c. 1430-55

The new stylistic concerns of the mid-Quattrocento are rooted in the life, thought, and artistic activity of the humanist Leonbattista Alberti (1404–1472), whose importance and influence for Renaissance art, already mentioned in preceding chapters, can hardly be exaggerated. Alberti's theories on architecture, sculpture, and painting made a lasting impact on each of these disciplines.

## Alberti

Latin was still almost exclusively the language of intellectual discourse, and Alberti authored works in Latin that ranged from poems and comedies to treatises on law, the horse, the family, and the tranquillity of the soul. In 1435 he circulated in manuscript form *De pictura* (*On Painting*), following in 1436 with *Della pittura*, an abridged and less erudite version in Italian. Alberti's *De re aedificatoria libri X* (*Ten Books on Architecture*), written before 1450, were the Renaissance counterpart to the only ancient treatise on architecture to survive, *De architectura*, by the ancient Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius. Alberti probably wrote *De statua* (*On the Statue*) in the 1450s. His writings express the doctrine that "virtus" was the most important quality to be sought in human life. By this he meant not "virtue" in the Christian sense, but a combination of ideal human traits: intelligence, reason, knowledge, control, balance, perception, harmony, and dignity. The last five

traits listed could also be used to describe much of Early Renaissance art and architecture.

Alberti, like the other Florentine humanists, was a member of an important Florentine family, but the Alberti family had been expelled in 1402 and Leonbattista was born in exile in 1404. He received a humanistic education at the University of Bologna, where he took his doctorate in canon law at the age of twenty-four and became acquainted with the humanist scholar Tommaso Parentucelli, who later became Pope Nicholas V. He derived no steady income from family sources and was thus dependent on stipends from patrons, who included both secular and ecclesiastical princes—the Este of Ferrara, the Malatesta of Rimini, the Gonzaga of Mantua, several cardinals, and at least two popes, as well as the Florentine merchant prince Giovanni Rucellai. As a young man Alberti traveled widely in Germany and the Low Countries, eventually became a writer of papal briefs, and for more than thirty years enjoyed the revenue (benefice) of the Church of San Martino a Gangalandi in the Arno Valley. He seems to have made up for his habitual absence from San Martino by a bequest to build a handsome Renaissance apse, apparently of his own design. Alberti's role at the courts of his princely patrons was that of adviser, and his artistic influence, especially in the realm of architecture and city planning, extended far beyond the buildings he designed.

Alberti first came to Florence in 1434, the year of Cosimo de' Medici's return from exile. But, in his own words, he

*Opposite:* 10.1. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *Gates of Paradise*, East Doors for Baptistery, Florence (now removed). 1425–52. Gilded bronze, height approx. 15' (4.6 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence. Commissioned by the Opera of the Baptistery and the Arte di Calimala for the Florentine Baptistery.
The outer frame, by Lorenzo and Vittorio Ghiberti and the Ghiberti workshop, has been dated c. 1448–52. This historic photograph shows the doors when they were still installed on the Baptistery; today they have been replaced with copies.

"went to Florence seldom and remained there little." Neither of his two architectural creations there were directly imitated by Florentine patrons or architects, although his architectural ideas had an enormous effect both in Florence and in other Italian centers, and the Roman High Renaissance is inconceivable without his innovations. His notions about the construction and organization of pictorial space and the compositional and narrative methods that painters should follow help explain the developments already observed in the works of Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi. Such ideas also clarify certain aspects of works in sculpture by Lorenzo Ghiberti and Donatello, and in painting by Paolo Uccello, Domenico Veneziano, Andrea del Castagno, and Piero della Francesca.

*Left:* 10.2. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI. *Self-Portrait.* c. 1435. Bronze, height 8" (20.1 cm; shown actual size). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The winged eye to the left is Alberti's emblem. The L. BAP. to the right, which is framed by two smaller eyes, refers to his name and perhaps also functions as a signature.

*Above:* 10.3. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI. Malatesta Temple (S. Francesco), Rimini, design for exterior, on a bronze medal after MATTEO DE' PASTI. 1450. Diameter 1½" (4 cm; shown actual size). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Kress Collection). Commissioned by Sigismondo Malatesta.

It was apparently during his time in Florence that Alberti executed a large self-portrait medal in bronze (fig. 10.2). He shows himself in strict profile, wearing a classical cloak, as indicated by the knot, and with a severe haircut based on classical models. Alberti was clearly in the vanguard of artistic developments, for this is the earliest known Renaissance portrait medal and the first independent self-portrait by a Renaissance artist, as well as the first to show the artist dressed in the antique style. Alberti's models were clearly ancient Roman coins, but in making the leap from a historic coin to a larger personal commemoration, he provided an early demonstration of the new way in which the individual would be understood in the Renaissance.

## THE MALATESTA TEMPLE.

At mid-century, Alberti was given an opportunity to put his classical ideas into visible form in an ambitious structure that, although unfinished, is known today through a medal and an elegant fragment (figs. 10.3–10.4). The Adriatic city of Rimini was at that time under the rule of the erudite but unscrupulous tyrant Sigismondo Malatesta—the only person in history publicly consigned to hell by the pope while he was still alive; the ceremony was performed by Pope Pius II in front of St. Peter's.

One of Sigismondo's offenses was the conversion of the church of San Francesco at Rimini into a sort of temple to himself and his mistress, Isotta degli Atti. The desecration had started unobtrusively. In the original Gothic church, funerary chapels were erected for Sigismondo and Isotta, and the architect Matteo de' Pasti was commissioned to clothe the arches of the interior in Renaissance dress. At the jubilee of Pope Nicholas V in Rome in 1450, Sigismondo seems to have made the acquaintance of Alberti, who was advising the pope on redesigning the papal city. For Sigismondo, Alberti created a design that would enclose and conceal the work of de' Pasti, which Alberti criticized in a letter dated 1454.

The medal struck for the laying of the cornerstone in 1450 shows a façade with three arches below and a central arch above. The medal and a number of buildings in Venice and Dalmatia that reflect Alberti's design suggest that the sloping roofs to the sides were to have been half-arches. These and the central upper arches were external reflections of a wooden barrel vault to be built over the nave and wooden half-barrel vaults over the side aisles. These vaults were to have been decorated to look like stone to confer an effect of simple grandeur onto a structure cluttered by Matteo's revetment. Alberti demolished the Gothic sanctuary to make way for the crowning feature of the building: the never-constructed dome seen in the medal. Alberti's own words support conjecture about the dome, which the medal shows as a huge hemisphere, as wide as the church and raised above a cylindrical drum. Although Alberti admired Brunelleschi's dome for the



10.4. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI. Malatesta Temple (S. Francesco), Rimini, exterior. Designed 1450; construction begun 1450 or 1453. Istrian stone, with details in colored marble. Commissioned by Sigismondo Malatesta.

Cathedral of Florence (see fig. 6.7), he insisted that its proportions were incorrect because they did not correspond to the pure geometry demonstrated in the design of the Pantheon (see fig. 1.2), which seems to be imitated here.

Only the exterior of Alberti's plan was brought anywhere near completion, and the elegance of the lower story of the façade makes one regret that the upper story was never completed. The triple arch below was based on Rimini's ancient Roman Arch of Augustus, which is only a few hundred yards away. The arches on the side elevations frame sarcophagi intended for the humanists of Sigismondo's court. Note that the arches of the façade and sides are supported by piers, not, as in a Brunelleschian building, columns.

Alberti defined beauty as "the harmony and concord of all the parts, achieved in such a manner that nothing could be added, taken away, or altered," and emphasized that the proportions of all the members and spaces were to be based on mathematics, as in Milan Cathedral (see p. 154) and the works of Brunelleschi (see p. 165). In response to questions about the relationship of the various parts of the temple, Alberti wrote that if "the measurements and the proportions of the piers" were altered it would "make a discord in all that music"—a reference that reminds us of the traditional relationship between mathematics, architecture, and music mentioned earlier (see p. 169).

Because arches were openings in a wall, Alberti emphasized, they should be supported by sections of the wall, while columns belong not to beauty as defined above, but to decoration and therefore should be treated as applied elements, not supporting members. The resultant emphasis on the block of the building itself is alien to Brunelleschi's more linear, planar architecture and his use of columns to support arcades both inside and out (see figs. 6.13, 6.17–6.18), revealing a fundamental change in the conception of a Renaissance structure. The effect of massive grandeur conveyed by the structure is enhanced by the arches, cornices, triumphal wreaths (enclosing slices of porphyry columns taken from the sixth-century church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna), and capitals. At first glance the capitals seem to be ancient Roman in derivation, but they were designed by Alberti, who combined ancient decorative motifs such as volutes, egg-and-dart moldings, acanthus leaves, and winged cherub heads. Matteo de' Pasti described Alberti's extraordinary designs for the capitals as "bellissimi" ("most beautiful"), suggesting that in his mind they fulfilled Alberti's definition of beauty.

## THE PALAZZO RUCELLAI.

A strikingly original contribution to the history of Renaissance palace design was the façade of the Palazzo Rucellai in Florence (fig. 10.5), which Giorgio Vasari attributed to Alberti. The palace belonged to an immensely wealthy Florentine merchant, Giovanni Rucellai, who wrote in his notebook that men have two roles in life: to procreate and to build. The classical design of Palazzo Rucellai, built about 1142–50, may be taken as a response to the Palazzo Medici (see figs. 6.22–6.26), started less than a decade earlier. The basic elements are similar: a rusticated three-story building with an entrance portal and high, square windows on the ground floor; mullioned windows on the second and third; and a massive cornice. But in the Palazzo Rucellai these features have been absorbed into a new proportional system. The three stories are of equal height, and the rustication, consisting of smooth "pseudoblocks" of stone (the real joints do not always correspond to the apparent ones), is identical in all three stories. Applied to this base is a grid of pilasters and entablatures, an idea apparently inspired by the Colosseum in Rome (see fig. 1.3) and intended to convey the humanist erudition of architect and patron.

The details are articulated with elegance. Alberti maintained that those who knew well the grammar of ancient architecture could devise personal vocabularies. According to ancient Roman practice, Ionic was placed above Doric or Tuscan, and Corinthian above Ionic; thus the ground story of the Palazzo Rucellai is Tuscan and the third Corinthian. But the second story displays graceful capitals of Alberti's invention, composed of acanthus leaves grouped about a central palmette—a fitting intermediate stage between Tuscan and Corinthian. Further decoration includes the portal cornices and the friezes containing Rucellai family symbols, including the elegant motif of a billowing sail, itself perhaps designed by Alberti.

The brilliant originality of this design supports Vasari's statement that the façade was designed by Alberti—an attribution sustained by at least two other sources. But other early sources mention a "model" of the building made by the architect and sculptor Bernardo Rossellino (see pp. 247, 260–1), and some later scholars have contended that he, not Alberti, designed and built the façade. Giovanni Rucellai, writing about 1464, states that the palace is his chief achievement in building but, typically for this period, identifies neither architect nor builder. Neither does the sculptor and architect Filarete (see pp. 433–34), who was in Florence in 1461 and described the façade of the Palazzo Rucellai as "all made in the antique style."

One possible solution is that Alberti created a design of only five bays, starting from the left. A five-bay façade would correspond with the design principles stated by Alberti in *De re aedificatoria*, where he recommended that, as a reflection of the natural bodies of humans and animals, a building should be centralized and have an even number of supports, combined with an odd number of openings—an idea based on the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth of the head.

10.5. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI (attributed to). Palazzo Rucellai, Florence, façade (left five bays only). c. 1452–58. *Pietra serena*. Probably extended later by BERNARDO ROSSELLINO. Commissioned by Giovanni Rucellai.

In Giovanni Rucellai's memoirs of 1473, he wrote: "Through God's grace, I have been very fortunate in the businesses of trading and banking. I was resourceful and competent, and I started working when I was still a lad.... From my work I gained a great reputation and a great deal of trust, and in my heyday I established many banking companies in Florence ... and branches outside Florence. I also at several times became involved with seven wood workshops as a business partner with several others. From these trades I have earned huge sums, and with the earnings I have supported vast expenditure, above all the taxes of the commune, for which I calculate that I have paid 60,000 florins up to the present day. I have also provided for the dowries of five of my married daughters, and this cost me 10,000 florins." After mentioning his expenditure for Palazzo Rucellai, the façade of Sta. Maria Novella, and other works, he concludes: "All of the above gave me and still give me the greatest satisfaction and pleasure, since in part they serve the honor of God as well as the honor of the city and the commemoration of myself. It is generally said (and it is true) that earning and spending are among the greatest pleasures given to men in this world, and it is difficult to say which one gives greater pleasure. Since in the last fifty years I have not done anything but earn and spend, which, as I said above, gave me great satisfaction and pleasure, it is my opinion that there is more happiness in spending than in earning."

It follows that a five-bay design should have six pilasters combined with four windows and a central doorway. In fact, documents indicate that just such a five-bay façade was built, starting about 1455 and completed in 1458. Later, as Giovanni Rucellai acquired more land, the sixth and seventh bays were added; the eighth remains fragmentary because the owner of the next house refused to sell. Moreover, the carving in the sixth and seventh bays is not of the same high quality as that in the first five. Perhaps Giovanni Rucellai called in Bernardo to extend his palace. In any case, scholars now generally give Alberti credit for the highly original and influential design of the palazzo. Its general principles were followed in many other buildings, some actually built, others merely designed (see fig. 14.30).

SANTA MARIA NOVELLA. Alberti also furnished the designs for other projects commissioned by Giovanni Rucellai, including the façade for the church of Santa Maria Novella (fig. 10.6), which has little in common with the Trecento church that it fronts (see fig. 2.34). The white-and-green marble structure is the only Florentine church façade on a grand scale to be built during the Renaissance. In its design Alberti followed the classicizing façade of San Miniato al Monte, a Romanesque church overlooking Florence, and divided the structure into an arcaded lower story surmounted by a temple design with pilasters crowned by a pediment. It is here that we see the name of the patron in huge Roman capitals and the Rucellai billowing sail is repeated at various points on the façade. Between the two stories Alberti inserted a mezzanine that serves as an attic for one floor and a base for the other. He framed the second-story temple on either side with large volutes, an ingenious solution to a problem that had perplexed designers of basilica façades for a millennium: how to unite a narrow upper story with a wider lower story and at the same time mask the sloping roofs that connected the two. In France and England the roofs were hidden behind towers; in medieval Italy, massive screens were commonly used. But Alberti's volutes make a virtue of necessity by hiding the straight slopes of the roof lines behind elegant double curves.

Alberti's solution is so successful that it is easy to overlook the problems he faced in creating a Renaissance façade for a centuries-old Gothic structure. When he received the commission, he apparently had to retain Gothic elements that were already completed: the two side portals, the six



10.6. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI. Façade, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. c. 1461–70. White marble from Carrara, green marble from Prato. Completion of the façade commissioned by Giovanni Rucellai.

tomb niches, and the placement of the *tondo* window. At first the problem of creating a classicizing façade that could incorporate these elements must have seemed insurmountable. But Alberti enclosed the niches within a round-arched blind arcade, repeating their horizontal green-and-white banding in the pilasters on both levels, and ignored the *tondo* window by enclosing it within the upper temple façade—further proof of his ability to impose "harmony and concord" within a difficult situation.

**SANT'ANDREA, MANTUA.** The most surprising of Alberti's innovations as a church architect are found in his design for Sant'Andrea at Mantua (figs. 10.7–10.9), even though it was built after his death and the current dome, added in the eighteenth century, has nothing to do with his intentions. Alberti's innovations at Sant'Andrea are, in part, based on his criticism of the use of the ancient Roman basilican plan for church architecture. The three-aisled plan of the Roman law court adopted for Early Christian churches remained standard for church design throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, as is evident in almost every church plan previously illustrated (see figs. 6.14, 6.19). But Alberti maintained that the three-aisled plan was unsuited for the worship of "the gods" (he never used the word "God," and in his writings one always reads the word "temple," and never "church"), because the columns that divide the nave from the side aisles could conceal the ceremonies at the altar for those standing in the aisles. This idealistic approach ignored the relationship between the rows of columns that divided the nave from the aisles and the procession toward the altar that was such a part of the developed liturgy. So, eleven hundred years of Christian architectural history were summarily dismissed.

Sant'Andrea was commissioned by Ludovico Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua (see figs. 15.24–15.25), in order to exhibit to pilgrims a relic of Christ's blood that St. Longinus was supposed to have brought to Mantua. In fact, at least nine major churches in Italy owe their existence to the wave of popular religiosity that, in the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento, took the form of the adoration of relics; five are covered in this book (see also figs. 12.21–12.23, 14.11–14.13, 17.16, 18.1 and 18.54–18.55), and none utilized the basilican plan, perhaps because a more unified plan could focus attention on the central role of the relic at each site.

For Sant'Andrea, Alberti's plan (fig. 10.8) was probably based on the barrel-vaulted chambers of the ancient Roman temple dedicated to Venus and Rome near the
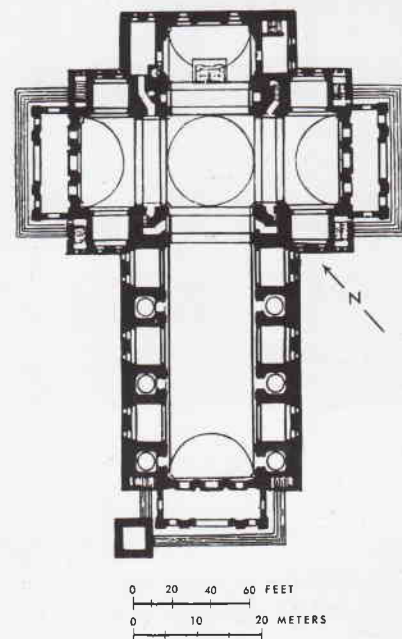


*Above:* 10.8. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI. Plan of Sant'Andrea, Mantua, as built.



*Left:* 10.7. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI. Sant'Andrea, Mantua. Designed 1470. Marble. Commissioned by Ludovico Gonzaga. Of all Alberti's buildings, perhaps Sant'Andrea best fulfills his statement on the desirable balance between decoration and structure: "One thing above all which a temple should have, in my opinion, is that all its visible qualities should be of such a kind that it is difficult to judge whether ... they contribute more to its grace and aptness or to its stability."

10.9. LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI. Nave, Sant'Andrea, Mantua. Designed 1470.

Colosseum. The gigantic barrel vault of Sant'Andrea (fig. 10.9) produces a unified spatial effect concentrating on the high altar. Nothing hides the ceremony. The lateral arches open into chapels, each itself crowned with a barrel vault. The single-aisle plan is matched by a single-story elevation, for the barrel vault rests directly, without clerestory, on the nave entablature, which is itself supported by pilasters on tall bases that frame the arched entrances to each of the side chapels. The harmony so important for Alberti is evident when we realize that Sant'Andrea's façade uses this same motif of barrel-vaulted opening framed by pairs of pilasters on high bases, integrating exterior and interior. That the motif is based on the design of ancient Roman triumphal arches, such as the Arch of Titus near the Roman Forum, reveals Alberti's continuing indebtedness to ancient Rome. For illumination Alberti depended on the dome, the huge oculus of the façade, and the smaller oculi in the chapels, each showing only the sky, wherein dwell "the gods."

Alberti's barrel-vaulted church interior influenced later developments throughout Europe, from Donato Bramante to Michelangelo and beyond to churches of the Baroque (see figs. 17.10–17.15, 20.9–20.11, 20.53–20.55).

ARCHITECTURE AFTER ALBERTI. The influence of Alberti's ideas was felt all over Italy. Pope Nicholas V's plans for a new papal Rome, centered for the first time on St. Peter's and the Vatican, were developed by Alberti. Several buildings in the city are indebted to his innovations and create a link between Alberti and the Rome of the High Renaissance and even the Baroque. In the sphere of urban planning, the influence of Alberti's ideas expounded

in *De re aedificatoria* is evident in Pius II's conversion of his native village of Corsignano into the papal city of Pienza (figs. 10.10–10.11). This project was carried out by Bernardo Rossellino, who had commenced the reconstruction of St. Peter's in Rome under Pope Nicholas V, doubtless under the supervision of Alberti. The piazza at Pienza is the first of the new Renaissance town designs that was actually built. In the Palazzo Piccolomini, Rossellino imitated the façade articulation of the Palazzo Rucellai, and Alberti's influence is clear in the bold blocks of the confronting church and palaces, to which pilasters, columns, and arches were added as decoration. Alberti's ideas on city planning also influenced other projects, including Filarete's plan for Sforzinda (see fig. 15.61) and the urbanistic vision of Luciano Laurana (see fig. 14.30).

Plans and façades of churches built in Florence in the mid- and late Quattrocento show strong Albertian influences. The Palazzo Pitti in Florence (fig. 10.12), commenced for Luca Pitti, a wealthy merchant, was attributed to Brunelleschi until the discovery that construction did not begin until about 1457, more than a decade after his death. The Quattrocento structure was originally limited
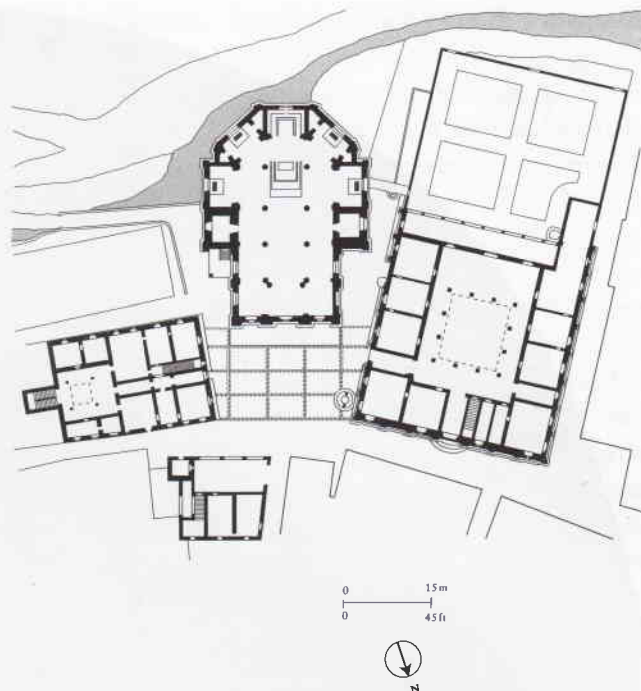


*Above:* 10.10. BERNARDO ROSSELLINO. Plan of Piazza Pio II, Pienza. 1459–62. Commissioned by Pope Pius II.



10.11. BERNARDO ROSSELLINO. Cathedral and Piccolomini Palace, Pienza. 1459–62. Commissioned by Pope Pius II.
In his autobiography, entitled *Commentaries*, Pius described the cathedral: "The façade itself is 72 feet high, made of stone resembling the Tiburtine, white and shining as marble. It was modeled on those of ancient temples and richly decorated with columns and arches and semicircular niches designed to hold statues.... The other walls are of less precious material.... There are three naves, as they are called. The middle one is wider. All are the same height. This was according to the directions of Pius who had seen the plan among the Germans in Austria. It makes the church more graceful and lighter."

10.12. Palazzo Pitti with the Boboli Gardens and Forte Belvedere, Florence, as seen in a painting by the Flemish artist Giuso Utens, 1598–99. Oil on canvas, 56¼ × 112⅛" (1.43 × 2.85 m). Museo Storico-Topografico "Firenze Com'era," Florence. Palace begun 1458. Commissioned by Luca Pitti, who owned this large site by 1418.

This view shows the façade as originally planned, before it was doubled in length in 1618–35. Other wings were added in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Both the Boboli Gardens and the Forte Belvedere seen here are sixteenth-century additions to the palace complex.

to the central seven bays shown in this painting, but it is not known whether the later courtyard seen here was originally intended. The powerful rustication and the grandeur of the superimposed arcades is based on ancient aqueducts, the ruins of which can still be found in the countryside around Rome. They seem alien to the taste of Brunelleschi as we have seen it earlier (see figs. 6.7–6.21), but it has been suggested that this dramatic new palace style might somehow be related to Brunelleschi's rejected design for Palazzo Medici (see p. 174). Others relate the style to the influence of Alberti; one proposed architect is the Florentine Luca Fancelli, who was not only deeply imbued with Albertian ideas, but was also in Florence at the time, and built much of Sant'Andrea in Mantua after Alberti's designs. After the palazzo became the official residence of the Medici grand dukes, it was extended during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see fig. 20.26), and the Boboli Gardens, visible in the painting, were developed. In the nineteenth century it served briefly as the residence of the Italian monarchy when Florence was the new nation's capital.

**ALBERTI AND THE ART OF PAINTING.** Alberti's position in relation to the pictorial art of his time is striking, but difficult to assess. It is still a moot point among scholars whether his ideas on perspective are a systemization of what the painters and sculptors he had met were already doing. In any case, Alberti's perspective theory was based on the medieval tradition of studying optics, derived from the writings of Aristotle. *De pictura* and *Della pittura* are important as the first known treatises on painting, as distinguished from handbooks of shop practice, such as Cennino Cennini's *Libro dell'arte*.

Alberti's formula for perspective used the height of a human being in the foreground as a basic module; the base line was then divided into segments corresponding to one-third of this height. His system sets the vanishing point at the height of the figure above the base line. Whether this proportional structure had been outlined by Brunelleschi is unknown, but Alberti's presentation provided clarification and a published system that any artist could follow.

The remainder of Alberti's treatise is devoted to what he calls *istoria*—which can be translated as "history,"

"story", or "narrative"—and how it should be represented, and to a discussion of the education of the painter. His three principles of pictorial art consist of circumscription, composition, and reception of light. These principles encompass Alberti's notions on drawing, division of the pictorial surface, light and shade, and color, his recommendations for naturally balanced color constituting a direct attack on the often aggressive color patterns of Trecento painting. Alberti was concerned with consistency and propriety in the representation of persons of various ages and various physical and social types, with their reactions to the dramatic situations in which the *istoria* placed them, and with the delicacies of anatomical rendering of bodies and features. He wished the narrative to unfold with copiousness and with a variety of humans and animals in poses and movements full of grace and beauty—a goal that was in opposition not only to the figural alignments common in the Trecento, but also to those in the compositions of Masaccio.

Above all, Alberti was well aware of what we might call the magical qualities in pictorial art, which he said were the foundation of religion and the noblest gift of "the gods." "Painting," he said, "contains a divine force that not only makes absent men present, as friendship is said to do, but moreover makes the dead seem almost alive." Alberti viewed the artist as a person whose education demanded the intellectual activity of the traditional Liberal Arts as well as technical training. *Della pittura* established a new dignity for both the art of painting and the artist, and laid a foundation that changed our understanding of the visual arts. The treatise's last words summarize what Alberti desired: "Absolute and perfect painting."

In many respects Alberti's ideals harmonize with the art of Masaccio, the only painter he mentions in the preface to *Della pittura*, but they are even closer to the painting of Fra Filippo Lippi and Fra Angelico, whom Alberti must have known personally. The new perspective governs Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* in the San Marco hallway (see fig. 9.7)—as distinguished from his pre-Albertian treatment of this subject at Cortona (see fig. 9.1)—and his San Marco altarpiece (see fig. 9.4). The frequent use of a foreground figure who looks out at the spectator in the work of Fra Filippo and Fra Angelico, the copiousness and variety of their compositions, and their analysis of the reception of light all correspond to Alberti's principles. By the end of the century some of the classical subjects he recommended were re-created by such painters as Sandro Botticelli and Andrea Mantegna (see fig. 13.29).

In the 1430s and 1440s, the two surviving giants of early Quattrocento Florentine sculpture, Ghiberti and Donatello, underwent changes of style that are in keeping with Alberti's new doctrine, if not always in accordance

with its details. Both sculptors may have become acquainted with Alberti during visits to Rome prior to Alberti's return to Florence in 1434; the dedication of his *Della pittura* of 1436 to Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, Masaccio, and Luca della Robbia suggests long friendship.

# Ghiberti after 1425

Ghiberti's second set of doors for the Florentine Baptistery, the so-called *Gates of Paradise* (see fig. 10.1), were so profoundly influenced by Alberti's ideas that they can almost be understood as a programmatic exposition of his theories. Ghiberti was in his late forties when he was awarded the commission for the final set of baptistery doors, devoted to the Old Testament, in 1425. The humanist chancellor of Florence, Lionardo Bruni, proposed a scheme of twenty-eight scenes that matched the two previous sets of doors and would have allowed Ghiberti to use his competition panel of the Sacrific of Isaac (see figs. 3.33, 7.3–7.4). A second proposal reduced the number of scenes to twenty-four, but the final scheme has only ten large square fields. This meant, of course, that Ghiberti's competition panel could not be incorporated into the final set. In the new design, the constricting quatrefoils that had framed scenes and figures on the earlier sets are abandoned, and so is the notion of gilded figures and forms set against a bronze background; now each square is totally gilded, background and all. Donatello had pioneered this idea in his marble *St. George* relief (see fig. 7.14), in which he created a unified sense of space without resorting to contrasts of color or medium.

The present title of the doors derives from the fact that the area between a baptistery and the entrance to its cathedral is known in Italian as the *paradiso*. It is reported that Michelangelo, playing on this word, said that Ghiberti's second doors were worthy to be the "Gates of Paradise," and this nickname stuck. The modeling in wax of all ten scenes and the friezes of the frame has been dated between 1429 and 1437, when all were cast in bronze. Finishing, gilding, and other time-consuming processes meant that the doors were not set in place until 1452.

Each panel deals with one or more incidents from the Old Testament, arranged within a consistent space that stretches from foreground into the remote distance. Although each panel was cast in a single piece, the foreground figures are so highly projected that they are almost in the round. The level of relief gradually decreases as the figures diminish in size and recede into the background, the most distant being scarcely raised above the surface. The illusion of continuous space is enhanced by the use of gold over the entire relief, giving the feeling that figures and space are united within a golden atmosphere.

The first scene, the story of Adam and Eve (fig. 10.13), shows the Creation of Adam at the lower left, that of Eve in the center, the Temptation in the distance at the extreme left, and the Expulsion from the Garden at the extreme right. The Creation of Eve has a central place because of the doctrine that her birth from the side of Adam foretold the creation of the Church. This parallel, represented in medieval manuscripts and stained glass, was also set forth in a chapter of the *Summa* of St. Antoninus, and it is possible that Antoninus was responsible for the programs of this and numerous other important Florentine works of art (see pp. 224, 228). The chapter from the *Summa* in question is a sermon on St. John the Baptist, to whom the Baptistery is dedicated, in which Antoninus compares the saint to a lantern whose light, thrown upon the Old Testament, brings forth the New. The ten specific Old Testament stories discussed by Anoninus are found in nine of the ten panels of the doors, which vary only occasionally from his text.

Ghiberti had represented the ideal male nude in the competition relief for the North Doors of the Baptistery (see fig. 7.3) and in the North Doors themselves (see fig. 7.6); the female nudes in his *Creation* relief for the *Gates of Paradise* are noteworthy as the first sensuous female nudes of the Renaissance. Although they are not classical in their proportions, they have some of the voluptuousness of the ancient nude sculptures Ghiberti must have seen in Rome.

The *Creation*'s graceful nude male and female figures contrast with the folds of the drapery and the clouds that shimmer around the angels and the figure of God. Here Ghiberti has created depth only to the limited extent needed for the Temptation a few yards off, and there is no distant view or horizon line, but in later reliefs on the doors he often leads the eyes past events in the middle ground into the deep distance.

By the time he made the *Jacob and Esau* relief in the third row (fig. 10.14), Ghiberti had adopted the perspective construction formulated by Alberti in *De pictura*. Presumably the relief was composed shortly after Alberti's arrival in Florence in 1434. The protruding apron that Ghiberti had used in the North Doors (see figs. 7.5–7.6) here becomes a base line, divided into sections as Alberti indicated, and from these divisions Ghiberti projected orthogonals to the central vanishing point. The pavement squares in the patch of raised terrace at the right do not recede to this vanishing point, and therefore do not correspond to the Albertian construction. But Ghiberti must have realized that these squares, if drawn in rigid conformity to Alberti's scheme, would have been compressed into absurdly distorted shapes. This shortcoming of one-point perspective becomes evident at the sides of an extended view, where it is necessary to make the transversals curve away from the picture plane. The narrative (which is based on Genesis 25) unfolds from the



10.13. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *The Creation*, panel from the *Gates of Paradise* (see fig. 10.1) formerly on the Baptistery, Florence. c. 1425–37. Gilded bronze, 31¼" (79 cm) square. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence.



10.14. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *Jacob and Esau*, panel from the *Gates of Paradise* (see fig. 10.1), formerly on the Baptistery, Florence. c. 1435. Gilded bronze, 31¼" (79 cm) square. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence.

background to the foreground. On the rooftop, to the right, Rebecca, feeling her twins struggling within her, receives God's explanation of the two hostile peoples who will spring from her womb. Under the left arch she appears in bed, prepared for childbirth. In the center, partly concealed by the foreground figures, Esau sells his birthright. On the right, "taught by God" according to Antoninus, Rebecca rehearses Jacob in his "pious fraud," which will be accomplished by the meat and skin of the kid he holds. Esau is seen at the far right going hunting. St. Antoninus's interpretation culminates in the foreground, where Jacob, symbolizing the Christians, receives the blessing on the step that foretells his vision of a ladder to heaven. The disappointed Esau, who confronts Isaac in the center, represents the Jews.

The arches are supported by piers, not columns, and the Corinthian order is used as decoration (see pp. 242–44);

presumably Alberti had discussed such ideas before he wrote them down in *De re aedificatoria*. But the architecture is Albertian in a deeper sense, for *Jacob and Esau* is an early example of a spatial construction that abandons the double scale of the Middle Ages in favor of Alberti's doctrine of visual unity. A single scale for figures and architecture is achieved by setting the building a measurable distance behind the foreground figures and allowing some of the incidents to move back into it. The figures, too, demonstrate Alberti's contention that the drapery should reveal the beauty of the limbs beneath, as seen in the four figures at the extreme left. Every motion is harmonious within the perfectly coordinated space. Running across both doors just above eye level, Ghiberti's conspicuous signature reminds us who was responsible for this "marvelous art". Nearby is his self-portrait in a medallion of the frame (fig. 10.15); it is an unforgettable self-assessment. In Alberti's phrase, Ghiberti has made "the dead seem almost alive."

## Luca della Robbia

Alberti's introductory note to *Della pittura* contains one name that is surprising, since Luca della Robbia (1399 or 1400–1482) does not seem to belong in the same league as Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Masaccio, the other artists mentioned. Writing as he was in the 1430s, Alberti's confidence was doubtless based on the marble *Cantoria* (choir gallery) being carved by Luca to be placed over the door of the left sacristy of Florence Cathedral. Both Luca's gallery (fig. 10.16) and Donatello's over the door of the right sacristy (see fig. 10.19) were removed when the musical requirements for a grand-ducal wedding in the seventeenth century rendered them obsolete. In the historical documents, Luca's *Cantoria* is described as an "organ pulpit," but that by no means excludes singers and perhaps other instrumentalists as well, given the small choirs and portable organs of the period. Documents reveal that a "small" organ was mounted on Donatello's *Cantoria* during the 1440s.

Luca's gallery consists of a parapet divided by paired pilasters supported on consoles. The marble panels are carved with music-making children and adolescents illustrating Psalm 150, which is inscribed on the *Cantoria*. The children praise the Lord "with the sound of the trumpet ... with the psaltery and harp ... with the timbrel and dance ... with stringed instruments and organs ... upon the high-sounding cymbals." They are beautifully grouped in compositions that are centralized or balanced—moving, playing, singing in relaxed happiness. His famous singing boys—some treble, some bass (fig. 10.17)—offer an unexpected touch of real experience within the idealized figures and graceful compositions.



10.15. LORENZO GHIBERTI. *Self-Portrait*, from the *Gates of Paradise* (see fig. 10.1), c. 1448–52. Gilded bronze. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence.
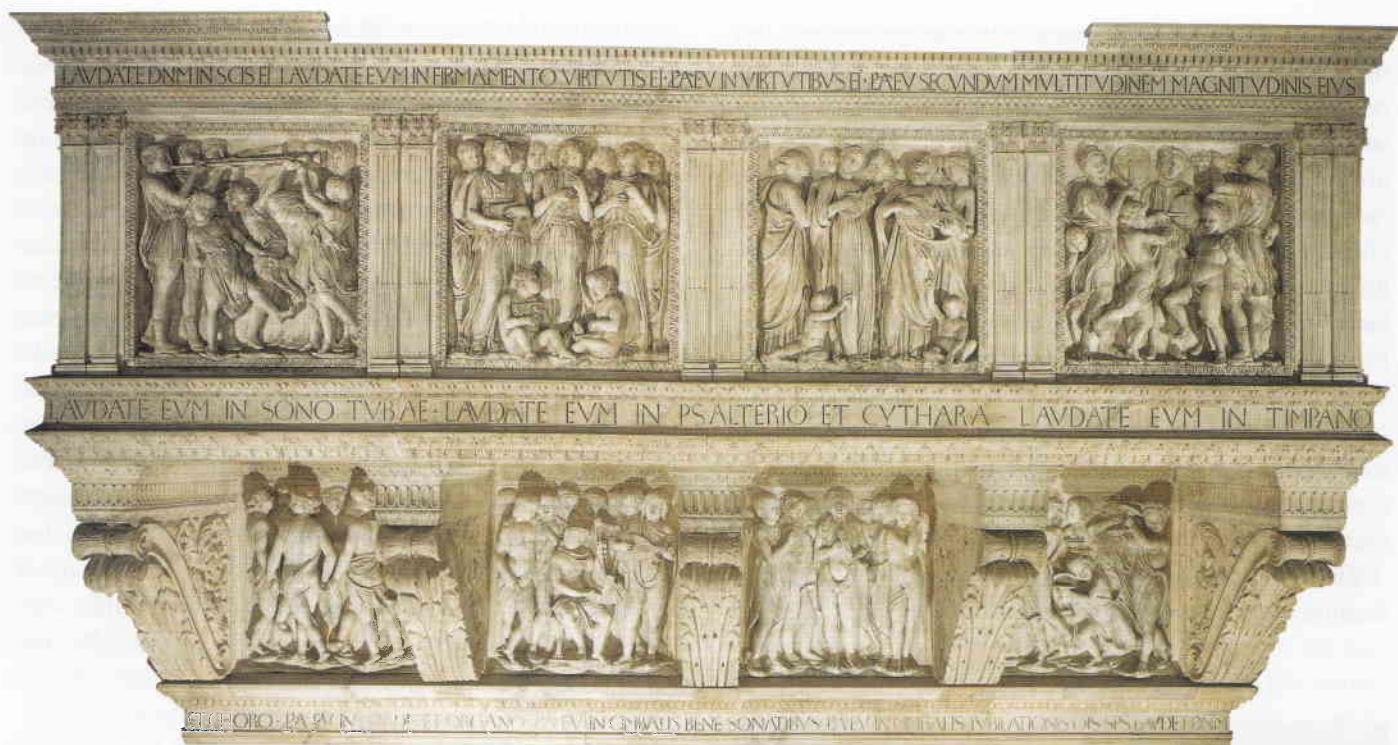
10.16. LUCA DELLA ROBBIA. *Cantoria*.
1431–38. Marble, length 17' (5.18 m). Museo
dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence. Removed from the
Duomo. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo.
Luca's *Cantoria*, like Donatello's (see fig. 10.19),
was dismembered in 1688 and reconstructed only in
the late nineteenth century, a re-creation that later
had to be corrected. Two bronze figures of *putti*
in the Musée Jacquemart-Andre, Paris, have been
identified as part of the *Cantoria*, but this
attribution has not been accepted by all scholars.

To posterity, however, the name Della Robbia has more
commonly been associated with works in enameled terra-
cotta with white figures against a blue background. These
durable and colorful works, made following a formula
invented by Luca in the 1430s, could be placed both inside
and out. Luca's nephew and successor, Andrea della
Robbia, and a host of assistants, continued the Della
Robbia workshop well into the sixteenth century.

Luca's earliest large enameled terra-cotta was a commis-
sion in 1442 for the *Resurrection* relief (fig. 10.18) over
the door of the left sacristy of the Florentine Duomo. It
therefore would have sat directly under his *Cantoria*. As
Brunelleschi's dome was nearing completion, it must have
been evident that the high altar area would be dark, and
Luca's enameled terra-cotta was a good solution to the
problem of how to enliven this area. The gold highlighting
of certain details, now largely lost, would have given
additional interest to the relief. The stable, symmetrical



10.17. *Singing Boys*, end panel from the *Cantoria*
(see fig. 10.16). Marble, 38 × 24" (96 × 61 cm).

10.18. LUCA DELLA ROBBIA. *Resurrection*. 1442–45. Blue and white enameled terra-cotta with surface gilding in the halo of Christ, the hair and wings of the angels, the armor, and elsewhere, 6'7" × 8'8" (2 × 2.65 m). North Sacristy Doors. 1446–75. Bronze, 13'8" × 6'7" (4.2 × 2 m); each panel 20⅞ × 20⅞" (53 × 53 cm). 🏛 Cathedral, Florence. Both commissioned by the Opera del Duomo.

The seated figures flanked by angels on the doors include the Madonna and Child, the four Evangelists, and five other saints, including the patron of Florence, St. John the Baptist. Above this door was originally placed Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria* (see figs. 10.16–10.17).

composition is typical of Luca's works, while the body of Christ, the togalike drapery, and the armor of the soldiers reveal how fully he had absorbed the classicism already demonstrated in the work of his fellow sculptors.

Two sets of bronze doors for the paired sacristies of Florence Cathedral were commissioned from Donatello in 1437, but because he made little progress, his commission for one set was in 1446 transferred to Luca della Robbia, Michelozzo, and Maso di Bartolommeo. The final payment for these doors was not made until they were put into place in 1475. While the model for the panel of St. Gregory the Great on the lower left has been attributed to Maso di Bartolommeo, the other nine were designed by Luca. The technique of the details is refined, but the compositions, which repeat the same motif of a seated figure flanked by angels ten times, are uninspired. It was these doors that saved the life of Lorenzo de' Medici at the time of the Pazzi Conspiracy of 1478 (see pp. 297–98).

# Donatello (c. 1433 to c. 1455)

What a contrast there is between Luca's serenity and the energy of Donatello's *Cantoria* (fig. 10.19)! Donatello was in Rome in 1432–33, and all the elements of his *Cantoria* are found in classical art—the egg-and-dart molding, the acanthus, the palmetto, the shell, the urn, the mask, and the paired dolphins that were part of the original decoration. But they never appear in antiquity in such combinations or with such proportional relationships. Even the most basic architectural elements are unconventional and unexpected. Donatello's consoles, for example, have horizontal and vertical volutes that seem about to collide. Every surface is ornamented, and the colonnettes and backgrounds are enlivened by rows of inlaid, colored marble disks.

Behind the colonnade surges a torrent of intense activity. Donatello's children refuse to be constricted by the neat frames of Luca della Robbia and seem to rush wildly through
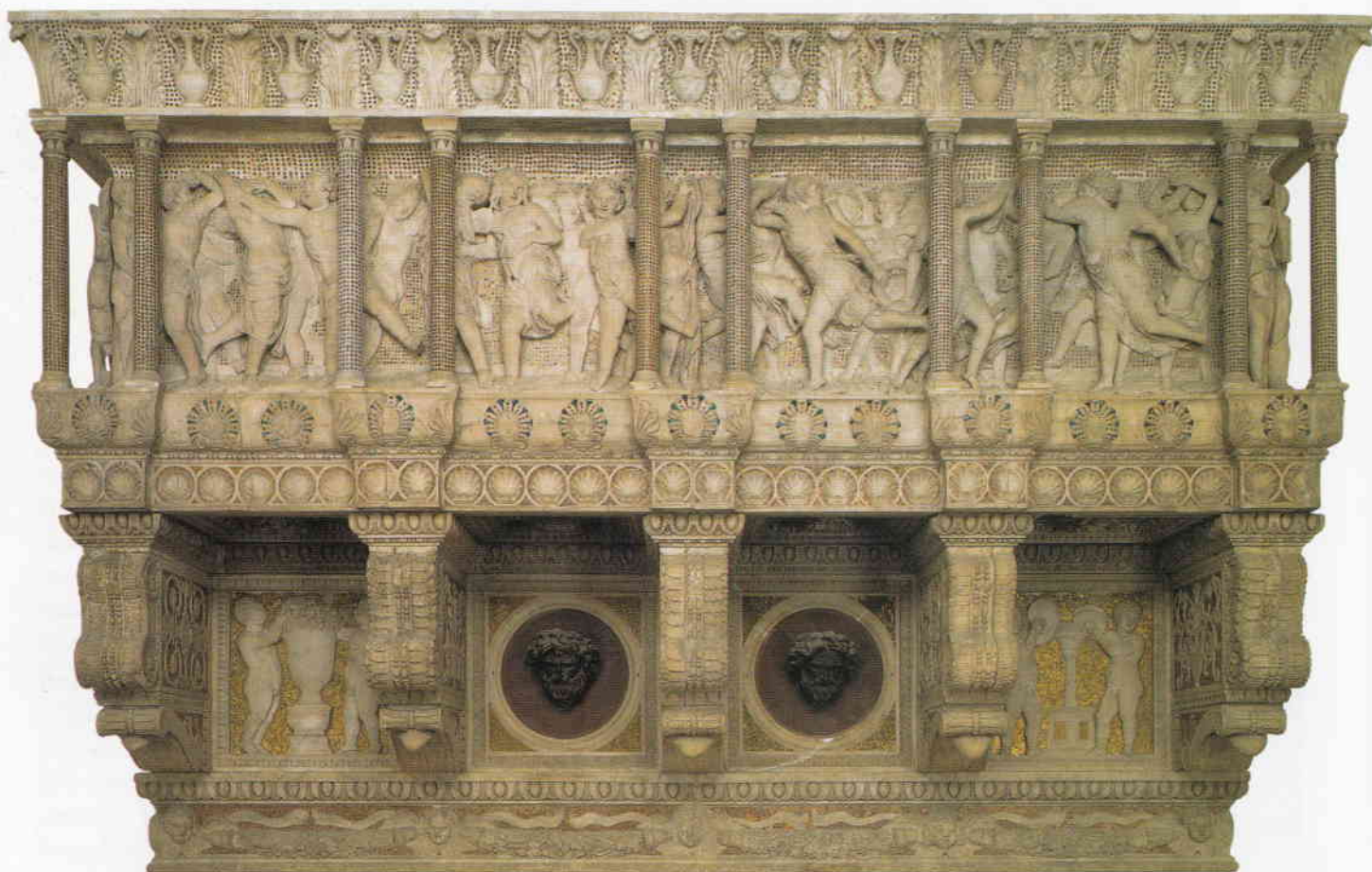


10.19. DONATELLO. *Cantoria.* 1433–39. Marble, bronze, and mosaic, length 18'8" (5.7 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence. Removed from the Duomo. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo.
When Donatello's *Cantoria* was reconstructed in the late nineteenth century, the upper frieze was incorrectly re-created; in addition to the palmettes and vases seen here, it should also include pairs of dolphins flanking shells.

space in jubilant dynamism. Transparent tunics cling to their limbs and feathery wings erupt from their shoulders. The result is a work of intense dynamism. Subsequent generations ranked Donatello's *Cantoria* higher than Luca's smooth and somewhat static work; Vasari, for example, wrote with enthusiasm of the sketchy freedom of Donatello's surfaces, which from a distance produced an effect of far greater vigor in its original dim cathedral setting.

One of Donatello's most delightful works, the so-called *Atys-Amorino*, was probably produced around the same time (fig. 10.20). While the carefree air suggests an ancient subject, no one has been able to identify which Greek or Roman figure might have been intended. If this work does indeed date from the 1430s and the subject is antique, then this would represent one of the earliest Renaissance works on an ancient theme. The combination of attributes—the figure's youth, the exposure of his genitals by unusual leggings, the wings on his shoulders and sandals, his little satyr tail, the snake that coils around his feet, the poppy heads decorating his belt, the cord tied around his head decorated with a poppy—do not point to any single classical deity. It seems likely that this joyful figure once held something that provided a clue to the union of such

disparate attributes. Perhaps this is a construct by a Renaissance humanist who synthesized several antique themes into a single figure.

The *Atys-Amorino* was almost certainly intended for a domestic setting, but where it might have been placed in a Renaissance home or garden is unknown. Despite these uncertainties, the infectious mood created by the figure's carefree expression and relaxed *contrapposto* stance is yet another example of both the antique revival in the Renaissance and the diversity of Donatello's style.

The *Annunciation* (fig. 10.21) shows another aspect of Donatello's new classicism. The architecture is as



10.20. DONATELLO. *Atys-Amorino*. c. 1435–40(?). Bronze, with traces of original gilding on the belt, hair, and wings, height 41" (1.04 m). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. By 1677 this sculpture was being identified as an ancient work.



10.21. DONATELLO. *Annunciation*. 1430s. Limestone and terracotta with gilding, 13'9" × 9' (4.20 × 2.75 m). 🏛 Sta. Croce, Florence. Commissioned by a member of the Cavalcanti family.

unconventional as that of the *Cantoria*, for a colossal egg-and-dart molding invades the frieze, and masks form the capitals. The terra-cotta *putti* above the arched pediment may be a reference to Etruscan temples, which Vitruvius reported had terra-cotta figures decorating their roofs. Donatello's treatment of the traditional narrative is subtle: Mary gently recoils in fear from the message of the kneeling angel before suddenly turning toward him, placing her hand on her heart to indicate her acceptance of his unexpected message. The faces of Mary and the angel, with their straight Greek noses, low foreheads, and hair drawn back from a central parting, are among Donatello's most classical passages. But neither these nor the evident classicism of the drapery can submerge the emotional tension evident in the momentary poses and complex surfaces.

The least expected work of this period in any medium is Donatello's bronze nude *David* (fig. 10.22), the earliest known free-standing nude statue in the round since antiquity. This fact alone would make it an important example of Renaissance art. What is equally remarkable, especially in comparison with Donatello's earlier marble *David* (see fig. 7.11) is the sculptor's interpretation of the theme. The slight boy, clothed only in ornamented leather boots and a hat crowned with laurel, stands with one hand on his hip and the other gripping Goliath's great sword. The *contrapposto* first seen in Donatello's *St. Mark* (see fig. 7.12) is more emphatic here—an effect enhanced by the active positions of the arms. David's pose seems self-conscious, as if the boy hero, who is described in the Bible as "ruddy, and fine in appearance with handsome features" (1 Samuel 17:42), is aware of his own beauty. The Bible also supports Donatello's representation of David as nude, for the boy at first put on the armor of Saul in preparation to do battle with the giant but then took it off (1 Samuel 17:38–39). The pose emphasizes the free-standing nature of the work, urging us to study it from various viewpoints. David's face is largely shaded by the hat, leaving his expression mysterious.

In the scholarly and popular literature on Donatello, the frankly sensuous nature of this *David* has been cited as an indication of the artist's homosexuality. The facts about Donatello's personal life are limited, but it must be remembered that this expensive bronze would not have been made for Donatello's personal satisfaction. Whatever its intended setting, the Medici, who seem to have commissioned it, found it appropriate to place the sculpture in a central position in their palace, visible from the street (see fig. 6.26). The palace's politicized decor included works that refer to traditional Florentine themes—for example, Hercules (see figs. 13.2–13.4) and the Old Testament heroine Judith (see fig. 12.7)—while Paolo Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* series (see figs. 11.5–11.6) celebrated a



10.22. DONATELLO. *David*. c. 1446–60(?). Bronze, with traces of gilded details; height 62¼" (1.58 m). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Perhaps commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici for the courtyard of the Palazzo Medici (see fig. 6.26).
While the figure was still in the Medici courtyard it bore an inscription stating: "The victor is whoever defends the fatherland. All-powerful God crushes the angry enemy. Behold, a boy overcame the great tyrant. Conquer, O citizens!"

Florentine victory. In the *Speculum humanae salvationis*—a fourteenth-century compendium of imagery, widely reprinted in the fifteenth century, connecting personages and events of the Old and New Testaments, David's victory over Goliath symbolizes Christ's triumph over Satan. The figure of David has also been recognized as a potent symbol for the city of Florence. The laurel crown on the hat and the laurel wreath on which David stands are probably allusions to the Medici family, but they could also refer to David's later activities as a poet. Perhaps the distinctly unheroic nature of Donatello's bronze *David* is intended to emphasize that even this unlikely hero could, with the help of God—as is emphasized in the Bible (1 Samuel 17:46–47)—defeat a giant who was threatening his homeland. Whether the figure was intended from the beginning to stand in the Medici courtyard is unknown, but its emphatic three-dimensionality suggests that Donatello must have been inspired by a location that would encourage multiple viewpoints.

Donatello's activity in Florence was interrupted when he left for Padua in the early 1440s. Remaining there for more than a decade, he changed the course of sculpture and painting in northern Italy. A whole school of painting grew up around him while he was, as he put it, among the Paduan "fogs and frogs." Vasari explained that Donatello disliked the adulation he received in Padua and was glad to return to Florence, where he knew that the habitual critical attitude of the Florentines would spur him on to greater achievements. This comment introduces an essential aspect of the Florentine Renaissance, in which conflict of wills was a determinant of style.

Donatello was probably called to Padua to execute the colossal equestrian statue in bronze of the Venetian *condottiere* Erasmo da Narni, whose nickname was Gattamelata ("Honeyed Cat" or "Calico Cat"). The monument still stands in the square in front of the basilica of Sant' Antonio, where Donatello placed it after its completion in 1453 (fig. 10.23), although the tombs that must have surrounded it have disappeared. Although the funds for the work were provided by the dead general's family according to a stipulation in his will, this kind of monument, previously reserved for rulers, must have been authorized by a decree of the Venetian Senate, who in 1438 had awarded Erasmo da Narni the baton the figure holds.

The *Gattamelata* is not the first equestrian monument of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance in Italy. In Florence, Donatello had an inspiring forerunner in Uccello's frescoed *Sir John Hawkwood* (see fig. 11.3). All the Tuscan examples, however, had been intended for interiors. In the Trecento, the ruling Scala family of Verona had built outdoor tombs surmounted by equestrian statues (see fig. 5.25), and Bonino da Campione had created an amazing monu-



10.23. DONATELLO. *Equestrian Monument of Gattamelata.* c. 1445–53. Bronze, height 12'2" (3.7 m). 🏛 Piazza del Santo, Padua. Commissioned by the Venetian Senate.

ment to Bernabò Visconti (see fig. 5.20). In 1441 Niccolò d'Este was commemorated by an equestrian statue by two otherwise unknown Florentine sculptors, which stood in front of the Cathedral of Ferrara until it was destroyed in 1796.

Donatello was primarily influenced, however, by surviving ancient Greek and Roman examples: the *Marcus Aurelius* in Rome (see fig. 1.4), then thought to represent Constantine; the so-called *Regisole* in Pavia, an imperial statue now lost; and the quadriga of horses on the façade of San Marco in Venice. Donatello's sculpture rivals the *Marcus Aurelius* in majesty and surpasses it in determination. Realizing the effect of the high base and the vast space in which the *Gattamelata* was to be placed, Donatello restricted his design to bold masses and powerful tensions. Any minor shapes that might compete with the broad curves of the horse's anatomy are suppressed. The tail, tied at the end, forms a taut arc, while the horse's left forehoof, poised on a cannonball, forms another. The powerful diagonal of the general's baton and sword ties the

composition together from above the horse's head down to his hind leg.

Donatello may well have seen Gattamelata himself in Florence or Rome, and it is likely that the head reproduces his features. The compressed lips, firmly set jaw, wide eyes, and heavy, arched brows all suggest a powerful personality in the prime of life (fig. 10.24). The horse, with his swelling veins, open jaws and flaring eyes and nostrils, is under the general's control. Donatello has created a majestic image of command. Although the humanist Vespasiano da Bisticci was so devoted to the contemporary cult of personality that he wrote *Lives of Illustrious Men of the Fifteenth Century*, he never set before his public a character more imposing than Gattamelata.

The general is dressed in fifteenth-century armor, complete with giant broadsword and greaves, but Donatello borrowed the kilt and short sleeves made of leather thongs from ancient Roman military costume. Victory masks and winged genii, flying or on horseback, decorate the armor and saddle. On the breastplate, a winged victory crying out in fury enhances, by contrast, the composure of the general. Virtually every element contributes to the impression of emotional and physical forces held under stern



10.24. Head of Gattamelata, detail of fig. 10.23.

control. In the *Gattamelata*, Donatello created the ideal man of the Renaissance, the exemplar of Albertian *virtus*. Donatello's other major commission in Padua was the high altar of Sant'Antonio, a grand architectural construction decorated with four large narrative reliefs, a number of smaller ones, and seven life-sized statues in bronze. The altar, remodeled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and wrongly restored at the end of the nineteenth, no longer looks at all as Donatello intended. The individual reliefs and statues are unchanged, but their ambience is lost; a painted altarpiece by Mantegna may reflect something of Donatello's original design (see fig. 15.19).

The complex architectural settings of Donatello's four reliefs representing the legend of St. Anthony of Padua (figs. 10.25–10.26) may be understood as his answer to Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* (see figs. 10.1, 10.14). Less harmonious, they present an explosive new conception of space as an alternative to Ghiberti's adherence to Albertian principles. The *Miracle of the Believing Donkey* (fig. 10.25), for example, tells how a skeptic refused to accept the presence of the body of Christ in the Eucharist unless his donkey would kneel down and worship it, which the animal promptly did. Donatello shows St. Anthony turning from the altar with the consecrated bread as the beast kneels on the top step. The crowds of the faithful are struck by astonishment, their lively poses and agitated drapery creating a vigorous surface pattern. The low viewpoint excludes any Albertian floor squares, and the figures are dwarfed by a construction with barrel vaults recalling the ancient basilica of Maxentius and Constantine in Rome. Donatello has filled the openings with metal grilles, through which one sees other barrel vaults and grilles. Between the arches, pilasters with modified Corinthian capitals support an entablature. This spatial formulation breaks forward and outward rather than receding smoothly into the distance, in sharp contrast to the more conventional treatment of space in the *Gates of Paradise*.

*St. Anthony of Padua Healing the Wrathful Son* (fig. 10.26) is even more surprising. Here Anthony heals the leg of a young man who had cut off his foot in remorse for kicking his mother. In the stadium-like setting, most of the elements recede according to the new perspectival convention, but a fantastic building in the background and a structure with a flight of steps in the right foreground are set at angles to the main axis and refuse to conform, as if to provide a spatial fracturing appropriate to the theme. Clouds float in Donatello's sculptured sky, and the sun throws out sword-shaped rays.

Donatello's dramatic compositions must have been a revelation for the north Italian painters of his day, and their influence continued to make an impact for the next century and a half.

10.25, 10.26. DONATELLO. *Miracle of the Believing Donkey* and *St. Anthony of Padua Healing the Wrathful Son*. 1444–49. Bronze, each 22½ × 48½" (57 × 123 cm). Reliefs on the high altar, 🏛 Sant'Antonio, Padua. Commissioned by the Arca del Santo for Sant'Antonio, Padua.

10.27. BERNARDO ROSSELLINO. Tomb of Lionardo Bruni. c. 1445. White and colored marbles, 20' × 10'4½" (6.1 × 3.2 m). ⌂ Sta. Croce, Florence. Commissioned by the Signoria of Florence or the College and Council of Arezzo. Originally certain details were colored and/or gilded.

## Florentine Tomb Sculpture

Throughout the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, sculptors on the Italian peninsula were kept busy producing funerary monuments, from simple floor slabs to splendid constructions erected on walls and even, when space on the walls was running out, squeezed onto the piers of churches. One of the most impressive wall tombs is that of Lionardo Bruni (fig. 10.27), the chancellor of the Florentine Republic and an eminent humanist scholar, by Bernardo Rossellino (1409–1464), the sculptor and architect who worked on the Palazzo Rucellai, and in Pienza. Bernardo was the fourth of five brothers who were stonecutters from Settignano (Antonio, the youngest, will be discussed later). In the tomb, the effigy of the chancellor, holding one of his own books, lies on a bier upheld by eagles. Angels in relief, posed like winged victories, support a tablet with a Latin inscription: "After Lionardo departed from life, history is in mourning and eloquence is dumb, and it is said that the Muses, Greek and Latin alike, cannot restrain their tears." Above, the Virgin and Child are flanked by angels, while at the top others steady a shield with the *marzocco* (lion) of the Florentine Republic. The rugged features of the old statesman are turned toward us, his brow crowned with laurel. In his clear-cut, simple arrangement and emphasis on the dignity of the individual, Bernardo established the standard type of the Florentine wall tomb.

## The Portrait Bust

The first dated Renaissance portrait bust is one of a pair of portraits of the Medici brothers, Piero (fig. 10.28) and Giovanni, sculpted by Mino da Fiesole (1429–1484) while both sitters were still alive. Underneath each bust is a full identification: name and age, year of bust, name of sculptor. The busts mark a distinct change from the patronage of Cosimo il Vecchio, the sitters' father, who had avoided the kind of personal ostentation and commemoration suggested by these works. In the following decades such portraiture would not be limited to the Medici family.

Although we prize such portraits for the glimpse they give us into Renaissance attitudes toward the significance of the individual, their function as objects in Renaissance society is far from clear. We know that busts were sometimes placed over the exterior and interior doorways of Renaissance palaces, but whether they played any particular role in family ritual is uncertain. Although the commemoration of the individual is an idea derived from Greek and Roman writings, ancient Roman portrait busts do not seem to have been a visual source for Mino's portraits, since the form of Mino's busts, with the figure cut off at chest level, is not related to ancient prototypes.

The innovations of the artists discussed in chapters 9 and 10 are based on the achievements of Brunelleschi and Masaccio. Classical references are frequent in architecture, the settings of paintings, and in works of sculpture. Masaccio's naturalism, which could be blunt at times, is modified in some works by a greater interest in idealism. An increasingly subtle use of perspective is demonstrated in both paintings and relief sculptures. These developments laid the groundwork for later Quattrocento art in Florence.



10.28. MINO DA FIESOLE. *Portrait of Piero de' Medici.* 1453. Marble, height 18" (46 cm). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Most likely commissioned by Piero de' Medici.

The carved pattern suggests a sumptuous brocade; it is decorated with emblems of the sitter and his family, including a diamond ring intertwined with a ribbon and the word SEMPER (always).

# 11

# FLORENTINE PAINTING AT MID-CENTURY

Four painters, each with a distinctive individual style—Paolo Uccello, Domenico Veneziano, Andrea del Castagno, and Piero della Francesca—demonstrate the impact of the ideas that concerned Leonbattista Alberti. These four were active when Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi were still at work (see Chapter 9); the age gap between these six artists was insignificant, so there must have been considerable interchange among them. In the works of their imitators, after mid-century, the styles of all six tend to fuse.

## Paolo Uccello

Paolo di Dono, known as Paolo Uccello (Paul "Bird," c. 1397–1475) was apprenticed to Lorenzo Ghiberti in 1407 as a *garzone* (the Italian word for "boy" or "youth"). Although Uccello had a long life, he seems to have painted little, and although he occasionally received an important commission, he was never responsible for a major altarpiece or large fresco cycle. At least twice his patrons complained of the unconventionality of his work. In his tax declaration of 1469, he lamented that he was old and infirm, had no means of livelihood, and that his wife was sick.

Everything about his mature work indicates Uccello's fascination with perspective (fig. 11.2). Giorgio Vasari wrote that Uccello could use perspective to represent a polyhedron with seventy-two sides projected in space. While this would be impressive in and of itself, Uccello added a further complication by projecting a stick with a
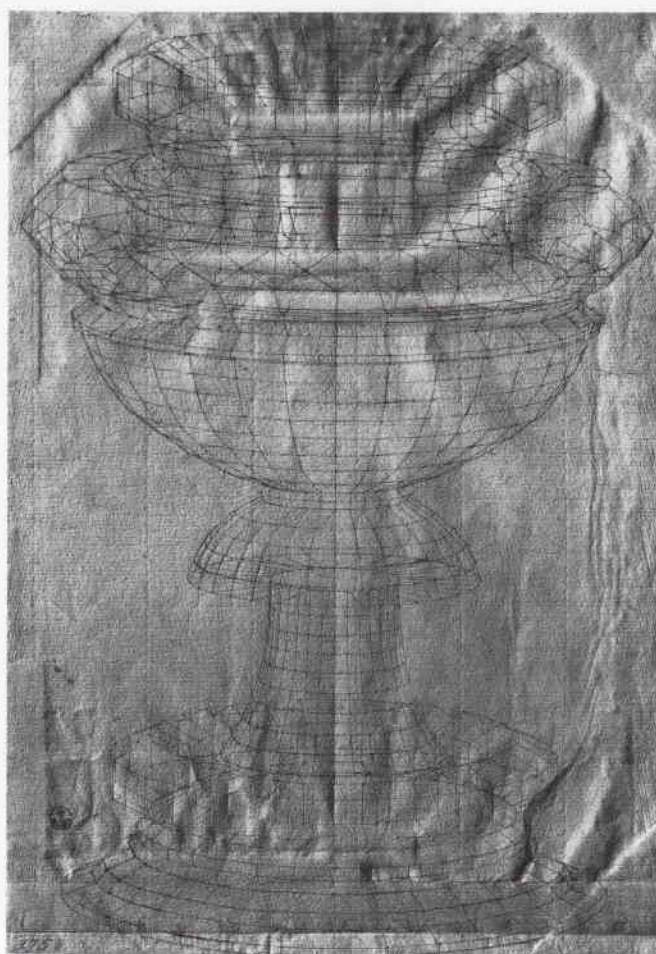


11.2. PAOLO UCCELLO. *Perspective Study.* c. 1430–40. Pen and ink, 11½ × 9½" (29 × 24.1 cm). Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence. This is only one of several drawings of objects in perspective by Uccello.

*Opposite:* 11.1. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO. *Last Supper* and, above, the *Resurrection, Crucifixion,* and *Entombment.* 1447. Frescoes, width of wall 32' (9.76 m). Cenacolo (refectory) of Sant'Apollonia, Florence. For the *sinopia,* see fig. 1.16.

scroll from each of the seventy-two sides, all executed in perfect recession. Also from Vasari comes the delightful tale that Uccello once refused to leave his work to follow his wife to bed, answering, "What a sweet mistress is this perspective." He seems to have viewed perspective as a challenge and perhaps also as a game.

Little remains of Uccello's artistic achievements before his fortieth year. His documented work at San Marco in Venice in 1425–27 is presumed lost, unless certain decorative mosaic designs attributed to him can be accepted. His earliest dated painting is a frescoed monument to the English *condottiere* Sir John Hawkwood (fig. 11.3). Before his death in 1394, the city of Florence promised Hawkwood an equestrian monument sculpted in marble; instead they substituted a fresco in the cathedral by Agnolo Gaddi and Giuliano Pesello, painted in 1395. This was later replaced with Uccello's version, which gives the illusion that the monument is bronze. Like Donatello's later *Gattamelata* (see fig. 10.23), Uccello's Hawkwood monument emphasizes the rider's control of the horse, but the *Hawkwood* monument is less tense: the baton is lifted lightly, the forehoof paws the air, the tail flows free. In contrast to the Roman trappings of *Gattamelata*, Uccello's general wears contemporary armor, cloak, and cap.

The pedestal rests on a base supported by three consoles, not unlike those of Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria*, also designed for the cathedral (see fig. 10.16). The fresco has been detached and is now, unfortunately, hung lower on the wall than its original placement, causing the consoles to lose their full illusionistic effect. Following the principles of Brunelleschi and Alberti, Uccello had established the original vanishing point to coincide with the eye level of a person standing in the side aisle; the vanishing point is now below the level of the cathedral pavement. The lowering of the painting does not matter for horse and rider, however, who are seen as if they are on the same level as the viewer. The disjunction between two viewpoints is disturbing once it is noted, and it is surprising given Uccello's interest in perspective. Documents may provide an explanation, for Uccello's patrons objected to his first horse and rider, and he was forced to repaint them. Perhaps Uccello, who seems to have been a lifelong practical joker, originally represented horse and rider from a worm's-eye view that would have emphasized the horse's belly and shown little of the rider except for the bottoms of his feet and the underside of his chin and nose. Its accuracy notwithstanding, such a representation would surely not have satisfied his patrons. In any case, the discrepancies in the finished fresco are noticed only after a thoughtful analysis.

Despite the inconsistency of viewpoints, Uccello's monument may well have tricked Quattrocento viewers into believing that Hawkwood had been granted a genuine



11.3. PAOLO UCCELLO. *Sir John Hawkwood.* 1436. Fresco, transferred to canvas; 24' × 13'3" (7.32 × 4.04 m). Cathedral, Florence. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo, Florence. Hawkwood was born in about 1320 in Essex; he died in 1394 and received a grand funeral from the Florentine state. His remains were buried in England; thus Uccello's fresco functions more as a memorial than as a tomb marker.

bronze monument instead of a less prestigious marble one. Today the illusion is reduced because the background color surrounding Uccello's fresco no longer matches the Duomo walls, and, to make matters worse, the monument is enclosed in a later, frescoed frame (not shown here). It now reads like a painting hung on the Duomo wall.

Uccello's fresco representing *The Deluge* in the Chiostro Verde (Green Cloister) of Santa Maria Novella (fig. 11.4) is part of a cycle started earlier by various painters, including Uccello himself. The cloister acquired its name because the frescoes were largely painted in a *terra verde* (green

11.4. PAOLO UCCELLO. *The Deluge.* c. 1445–55(?) Fresco, 7' × 16'9" (2.15 × 5.1 m). Chiostro Verde, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. The scenes below are *The Sacrifice of Noah* and *Noah's Drunkenness.*

earth) monochrome. The cycle has been damaged (ironically enough, considering Uccello's subject) by floods over the centuries, but the work is still impressive. Uccello shows us two scenes within the lunette, giving two views of Noah's pyramidal ark, side by side, and creating a strong perspective recession in the center. As no border divides the episodes, the figures in the scenes overlap. On the left, the ark is threatened by thunder, lightning, wind, and rain. A lightning bolt strikes in the distance, casting the shadow of a tree being blown away by a wind god, whose inclusion was recommended by Alberti. Doomed humans try to board the ark. Riding a swimming horse, one brandishes a sword and is threatened by another with a club, while a third clutches at the ark with his fingers. Others try to stay afloat on wreckage or in barrels. The club-bearer wears one of the favorite subjects of Uccello's perspective investigations, the *mazzocchio*, a faceted construction of wire or wicker around which a turban-shaped headdress was draped. The *mazzocchio* has slipped round

the figure's neck, and the hair on one side of his head remains neatly combed, while the other side is disheveled by the wind. A ladder floats parallel to the ark, providing two more Albertian orthogonals.

On the right the ark has come to rest, and Noah leans from its window as the dove, sent forth to discover dry land, returns. Below the ark is the corpse of a drowned child; a raven picks out the eyes of another. The cloaked man standing in the right foreground with one hand raised, while two hands clutch his ankles from the water below, has been difficult to identify. The powerful drapery masses, the intensity of the faces, and the sense of tragedy in the individual figures and groups are compelling enough to make us overlook the riddles Uccello seems to pose.

Uccello's three panels of the *Battle of San Romano* (see figs. 11.5–11.6) recall a Florentine victory over the Sienese in 1432. Commissioned by a member of a prominent Florentine family, in 1484 they were moved to the Medici Palace at the command of Lorenzo il Magnifico. Originally

arched to fit into a vaulted chamber, the panels' tops were later truncated, explaining why no horizon line or sky is visible today. The three panels form a continuing interlace of horses, horsemen, and weapons on a narrow foreground stage separated from the landscape background by a screen of fantastic fruit trees, creating a tapestry-like effect. The brilliant colors would have been enhanced by the silver armor (now tarnished and largely unrestorable).

As a whole the battle panels lack the intensity felt in *The Deluge*. The rearing horses seem rather wooden, and the impression is of a tournament rather than a military engagement. This is partly due to Uccello's geometricization of the forms, as well as his emphasis on ornament rather than the grim reality of battle; Uccello's concern with perspective also distracts from the subject matter. Most of the broken lances have fallen as Albertian orthogonals, as have pieces of armor, including, in the lower left-hand corner of one panel (fig. 11.5), a shield. Around this is wrapped a scroll bearing Uccello's signature in perspective, reminding us that perspective demonstrations often included such scrolls rotating in space. Horses and horsemen are seen in

profile or in foreshortening so that they recede into depth or plunge toward the spectator, often at right angles to the orthogonals formed by the lances. In one instance, at the lower left of the London panel (fig. 11.6), a soldier has conveniently fallen on a perspective orthogonal, perpendicular to the picture plane. It is as if perspective is not a phenomenon of vision, but a magical process, implicit in the air, able to force its will on persons and objects.

Although the landscape looks stylized, it resembles the hills divided into fields still visible in the Arno Valley. All sorts of things go on in this background: hand-to-hand combat and soldiers in pursuit of the enemy expand the main narrative, while a dog is shown in hot pursuit of a rabbit, and peasants bring baskets of grapes to the wine press. The latter two add a sense of daily life and would have been more prominent had the expanse of landscape leading back to the horizon and sky not been cut away. Like so many of the seemingly minor episodes captured in the background of Renaissance paintings, they express the desire of artists of the period to capture the full extent of human experience.
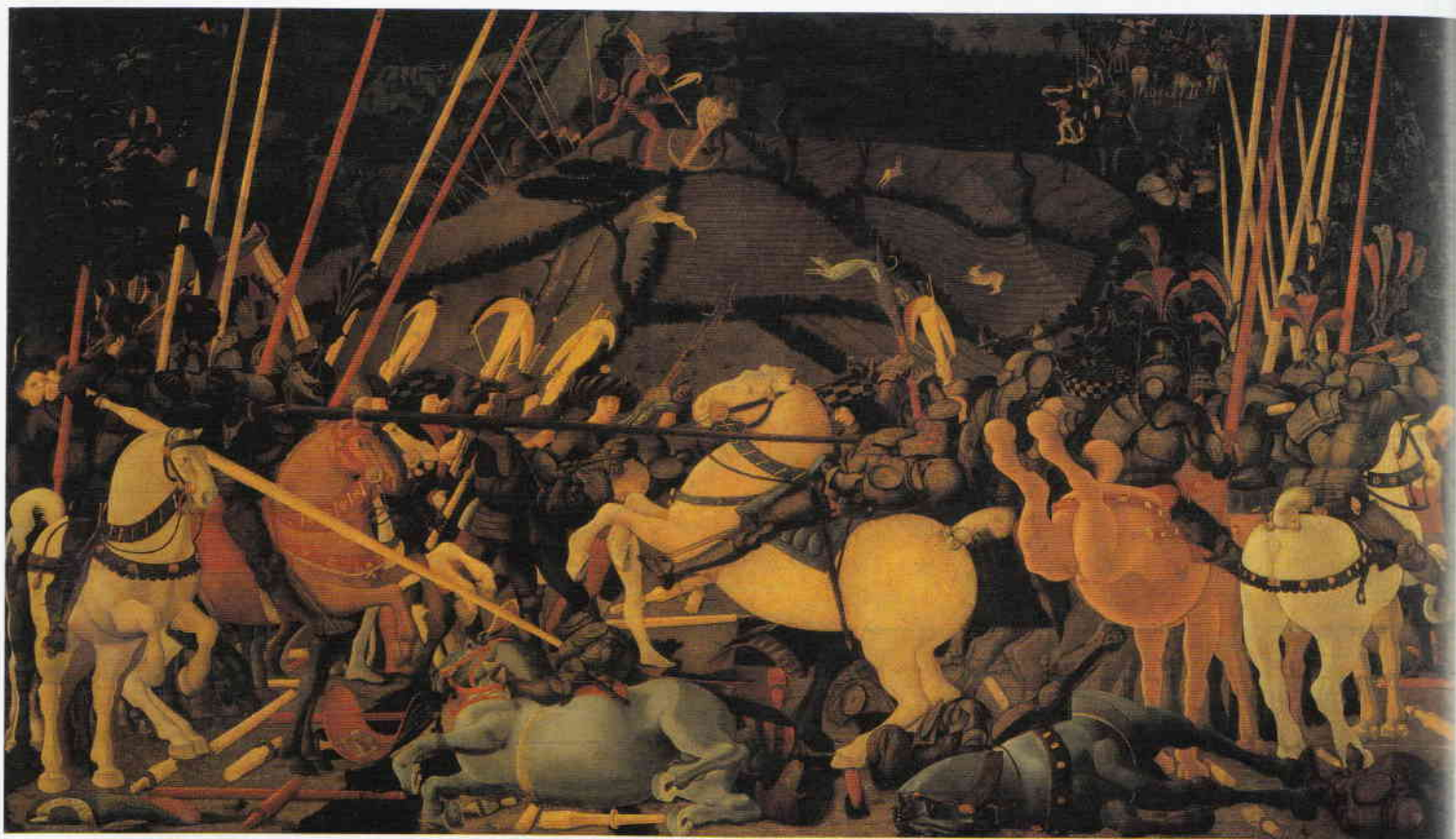


11.5. PAOLO UCCELLO. *Battle of San Romano*. c. 1435–60. Panel, 6' × 10'5" (1.82 × 3.23 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Lionardo di Bartolomeo Bartolini Salimbeni. Uccello's signature is on the shield in the lower left corner. The signature and the central position of Niccolò da Tolentino, leader of the Florentine forces, in this panel suggest that it may have been the center one in the series of three, only two of which are reproduced here.

11.6. PAOLO UCCELLO. *Battle of San Romano.* c. 1435–60. Panel, 6' × 10'5" (1.82 × 3.23 m). National Gallery, London. Commissioned by Lorenzo di Bartolomeo Bartolini Salimbeni. An inventory made of the contents of the Medici Palace in 1492 lists the three panels of the *Battle of San Romano* in a bedroom that had belonged to Lorenzo il Magnifico; the other contents of the room including a bed with *intarsia* decoration, seven brass candelabra, and a number of other paintings, including animal scenes, a large *tondo* of the Adoration of the Magi, and portraits. A technical analysis has revealed that the medium is egg tempera with walnut oil and linseed oil on poplar.

# Domenico Veneziano

Domenico Veneziano (c. 1410–1461), as his name discloses, came from Venice. His artistic origins and the dates of many of his works are as uncertain as the date of his birth. One of his earliest known works, a large *tondo* of the *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 11.7), reveals that Domenico knew well the works of Masaccio and Fra Angelico. Like their works, the painting sets a many-figured composition within a naturalistic setting, the forms projected in space and light. The heads and headgear, the masses of curled hair, the stockinged legs, and the velvet, brocade, and fur sleeves are all painted flawlessly, and they overlap and diminish as they recede into the distance. Domenico's landscape background, however, reveals his northern origins, for it is reminiscent of the shores and sub-Alpine surroundings of Lake Garda in northern Italy, with sailboats, castles, a road, travelers, and even a corpse swinging on a roadside gibbet. Familiarity with Netherlandish works may have prompted such attention to nature

and the details of daily life. The *tondo* shape itself, an innovation rapidly being taken up by Quattrocento artists, poses particular compositional challenges that Domenico solves by the insistent horizontal of his composition (see figs. 13.21, 16.39). The elegant costumes would apparently have been illegal in Florence because of sumptuary laws, but that did not prevent the Florentines from enjoying their representation. To add a touch of the exotic, Domenico endowed two of his figures with the towering hats of Greek courtiers and others with costumes bearing French and Italian mottoes inscribed in Gothic letters.

In 1438 (see p. 224), Domenico wrote from Perugia, where he was painting frescoes, to the twenty-two-year-old Piero the Gouty, son and heir of Cosimo de' Medici: "I have hope in God to be able to show you marvelous things." Perhaps this *tondo* was one of them, since it was in the Medici Palace in 1492. The mottoes are Medicean, and the standing figure to the right of the second magus is probably a portrait of Piero de' Medici; the sumptuous textiles would have appealed to Piero's taste for luxurious

11.7. DOMENICO VENEZIANO. *Adoration of the Magi*. c. 1439–41. Panel, diameter 33" (84 cm). Gemäldegalerie, Berlin. Perhaps commissioned by Piero de' Medici for the Medici Palace.

fabrics. By 1439 Domenico was at work in Florence on a cycle of frescoes for the church of Sant'Egidio, now almost completely lost. He was assisted by the youthful Piero della Francesca, Alesso Baldovinetti, and others.

Domenico's principal surviving work, the St. Lucy altarpiece (fig. 11.8), was painted about 1445–47. While the altarpiece has the "modern" square shape that replaced Gothic polyptychs, there is a reference to the former in the Gothic arches that frame the enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by saints Francis, John the Baptist, Zenobius, and Lucy. The panel glows with a kind of color so foreign to Florentine

experience that it explains Vasari's unexpected statement that Domenico's altarpiece was painted in oil (technical examination has revealed that it is not). The architecture of Domenico's courtyard—arches, spandrels, steps, and an elaborate pavement inlaid in rose, white, and green marbles, like the Florentine Campanile—is conceived in color, and all its shadows are lightened by reflections from adjacent surfaces. Veneziano shows his understanding of scientific perspective through his rendering of the complex floor.

Some of the "marvelous things" that Domenico promised in his letter are suggested by the softly colored shadows
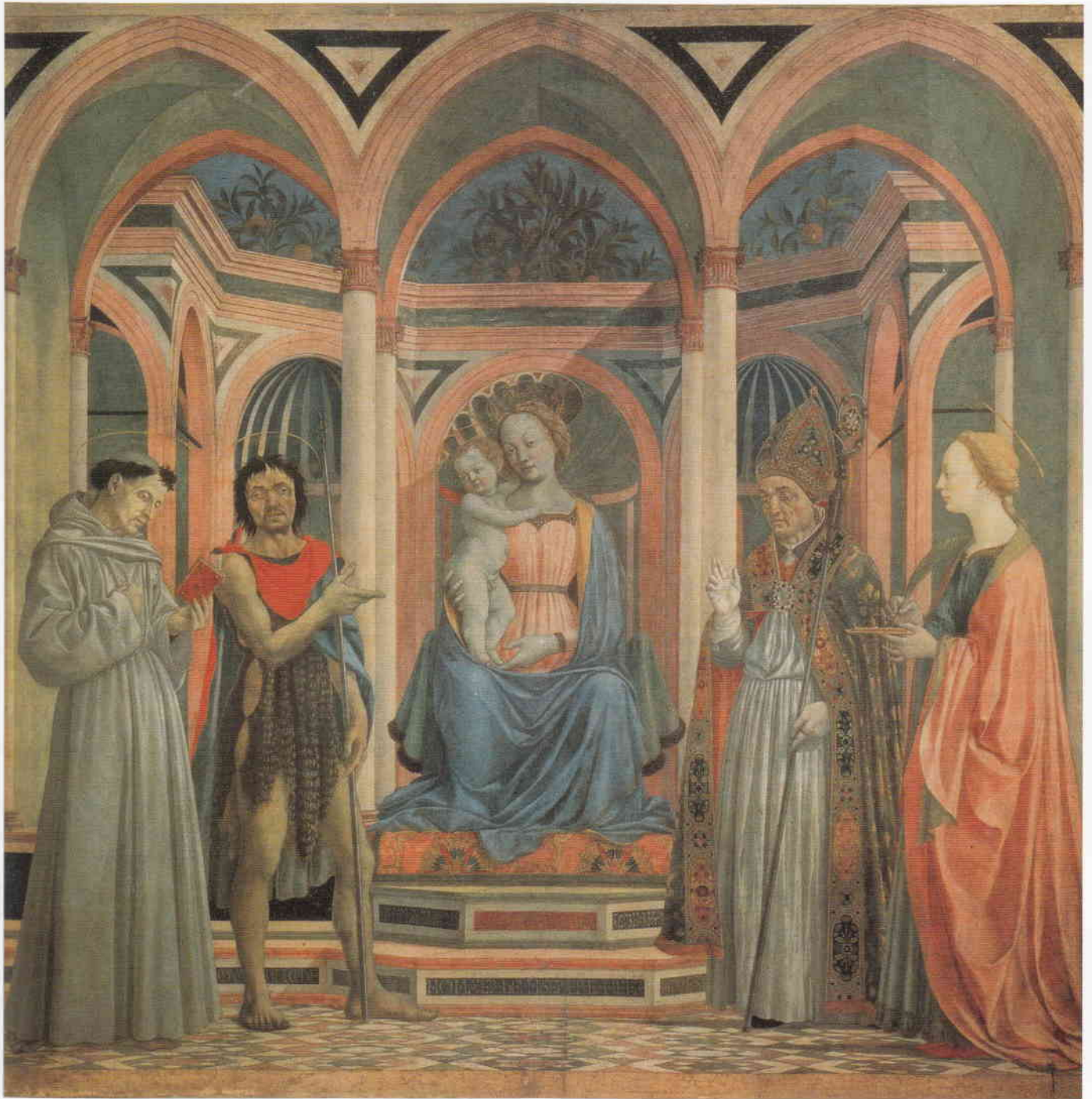
11.8. DOMENICO VENEZIANO. *Madonna and Child with Sts. Francis, John the Baptist, Zenobius, and Lucy* (St. Lucy altarpiece). c. 1445–47. Panel, 6'10" × 7' (2.09 × 2.16 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned for the high altar of Sta. Lucia de' Magnoli, Florence, in a chapel that was the property of the Uzzano family. The altarpiece is signed by Domenico. The original frame is lost, and the predella scattered in several museums; here we offer a reconstruction that clarifies the relationship of the predella panels to the figures above: the *Stigmatization of St. Francis* (National Gallery of Art, Washington); *St. John the Baptist in the Desert* (see fig. 11.10); the *Annunciation* (see fig. 11.9); a *Miracle of St. Zenobius* (see fig. 11.11); and *The Martydom of St. Lucy* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).

of the shell niches and the fabrics—the damask below the Virgin's feet, the blue cloth of her cloak, the green velvet of the sable-trimmed mantle thrown over her chair, the vestments of St. Zenobius, the rose-colored cloak of St. Lucy, and the pearls that shine at the neckline of her tunic and that of the Virgin. In St. Zenobius's miter, Domenico has even distinguished between the dull tone of seed pearls in the embroidery and the luster of larger pearls. The solid haloes of earlier art are here transformed into disks of crystal rimmed with gold. The wrinkled faces of the male saints suggest that Domenico had studied the works of Donatello and Lorenzo Ghiberti, while the firm, muscular forms of St. John's limbs follow Florentine practice, and the easy flow of the drapery folds is in harmony with passages in the *Gates of Paradise* (see figs. 10.13–10.14). Yet these forms have been created less by the traditional Florentine means of drawing in line, followed by shading, than by the changing play of light on color.

Nowhere is Domenico's interest in color more apparent than in the figure of St. Lucy, who holds the palm of martyrdom and the platter holding her eyes, which she plucked out and sent to a young man who had admired them excessively. (The Virgin rewarded her with a new pair.) Light was especially appropriate to Lucy, patron saint of vision, and Domenico's light penetrates the shadows of her rosy cloak and gives three-dimensionality to its folds. This poised figure seems to typify the new aristocratic ideal of the Florentine upper middle class. St. Lucy's swept-back blond hair, its design enhanced by the wispy locks that have escaped, brings out the pallor of the face and forehead. The head is like one of Domenico's giant pearls, so gently does the light glide across it and across the silken surface of the neck.

The setting of the *Annunciation* (fig. 11.9), the altarpiece's central predella, is a court of elegant forms that contrast with Mary's rough bench and simple rush chair, which are almost identical with those still used in Italian farmhouses. The angel kneels while Mary crosses her hands upon her chest. We look through an arch into the closed garden, symbol of Mary's virginity, as already seen in the Annunciations of Fra Angelico (see figs. 9.1, 9.7). The garden ends in a *porta clausa*, a gateway studded with nails and secured with a huge wooden bolt. The rose beds and the vine clambering over the trellis are painted with delicate touches that recall the foliage in Masaccio's frescoes (see fig. 8.16). Here Domenico uses a single touch of the brush to represent a ray of sunlight reflected from a leaf or petal.

An even more intense rendering of sunlight can be seen in the predella representing the youthful *St. John the Baptist in the Desert* (fig. 11.10). In the Trecento, St. John had been shown trudging cheerfully off, cross-staff in hand. Domenico's picture depicts the boy dropping his



11.9. DOMENICO VENEZIANO. *Annunciation*, from the predella of the St. Lucy altarpiece (see fig. 11.8). c. 1445–47. Panel, $10^5/8 \times 21^1/4$" (27 × 54 cm). Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England.

11.10. DOMENICO VENEZIANO. *St. John the Baptist in the Desert*, from the predella of the St. Lucy altarpiece (see fig. 11.8). c. 1445–47. Panel, 11³/₁₆ × 12½" (28.4 × 31.8 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, (Kress Collection). The faux-marble frame around the scene is original.



11.11. DOMENICO VENEZIANO. *A Miracle of St. Zenobius*, from the predella of the St. Lucy altarpiece (see fig. 11.8). c. 1445–47. Panel, 11¼ × 12¾" (28.6 × 32.5 cm). Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England.

clothes on the rocky ground as he prepares to put on the camel's skin he will wear in the wilderness. The almost Greek beauty of the nude figure is in keeping with Ghiberti's Isaac of the competition relief for the North Doors of the Florentine Baptistery and the Christ of the *Flagellation* (see figs. 7.3, 7.6). The fierce sunlight changes the facets of the surging forms of the mountains to blue-white and yellow-white. The same light reflects from the rounded forms of the boy's body and dwells on every pearly stone.

Three other predella panels, illustrated to scale in figure 11.8, represent scenes from the legends of the other saints. To the far left, the *Stigmatization of St. Francis* is set in a landscape similar to that of the *St. John the Baptist* predella panel. Here, however, the mountains are more varied in color, perhaps to suggest the exotic landscape of La Verna where the stigmatization took place. In contrast, the miracle being performed by the Florentine bishop St. Zenobius (fig. 11.11) is set in a crowded cityscape with upper rooms supported on struts like those we have already seen in a fresco by Masaccio (see fig 8.15). The dramatic responses of the onlookers in this scene contrast sharply with the calm serenity conveyed by the standing saints above and the meditative interpretation of the adjacent *Annunciation*. In the final predella, the *Martyrdom of St. Lucy* is silhouetted against a simple stone wall.

## Andrea del Castagno

One of Domenico's contemporaries in Florence was Andrea del Castagno (1417/19–57). According to Vasari, Castagno was a coarse and violent man who became so jealous of Domenico's skill at painting in oil in the Venetian manner (though oil was not generally adopted in Venice until about 1475) that he murdered him. Vasari added that no one would have known who killed Domenico if Castagno had not confessed on his deathbed. This story blackened Castagno's reputation until the nineteenth-century archivist Gaetano Milanesi discovered that Castagno died four years before his supposed victim. Yet with that much smoke there is usually some flame, and Castagno may well have been a difficult individual. Certainly, the human dilemma he presents in his works contrasts vividly with the serene world painted by Domenico. Andrea came from a village called Castagno ("Chestnut Tree") high in the Apennines, yet nature seldom appears in his work. His interest is in the human figure and human character; the types he prefers seem to be based on the peasants and mountaineers of his Tuscan birthplace. Castagno is one of the first Renaissance artists to demonstrate an interest in capturing movement.

Castagno's surviving masterpiece is his huge fresco of the *Last Supper and Scenes of the Passion* for the convent

of Sant'Apollonia (figs. 11.1, 11.12). Because the nuns were under *clausura* (they could have no visitors and the convent was closed to all outsiders), the frescoes probably became inaccessible to Castagno's contemporaries as soon as they were finished, and they escaped notice until the kingdom of Italy expropriated the monasteries in the late nineteenth century. As we saw earlier in Taddeo Gaddi's fresco (see fig. 3.31), the Last Supper was often chosen for representation in refectories. The theme served to remind the members of the community daily that Christ's sacrificial self-perpetuation in the form of bread and wine at the Mass was established at a ritual meal.

In accordance with the Tuscan visual tradition, Judas is seated on our side of the table. He does not, however, dip his hand into the dish with Christ, which was how most earlier artists, including Taddeo Gaddi, had represented the scene. Their source was either St. Matthew or St. Mark, but Castagno followed the account written by
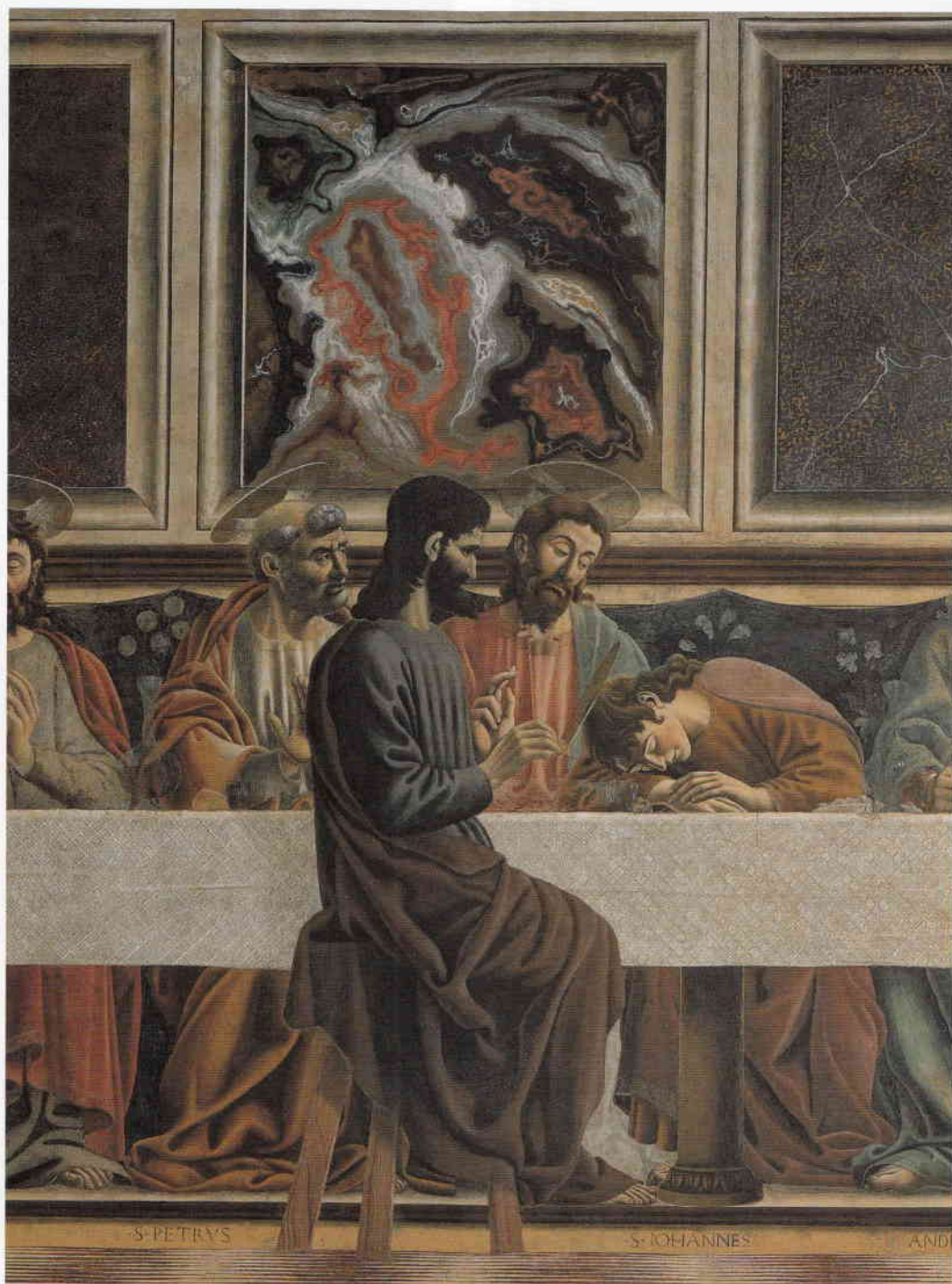


**11.12. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO.** Detail of the *Last Supper* (see fig. 11.1).

St. John, which includes Christ's announcement that the betrayer would be the apostle to whom he gave a piece of bread dipped in wine (13:26). Castagno contrasts Christ's hand blessing the bread and wine with that of Judas already holding the bread given him by Christ. Ludolph of Saxony, a fourteenth-century theologian, wrote that at this moment in St. John's Gospel the Devil entered Judas. Indeed, Castagno's betrayer has assumed a diabolical aspect, with hooked nose, jutting beard, and hornlike ears. One story held that St. John fell asleep at the supper with his head on Christ's chest so that he could understand the secrets held in Christ's heart, which seems to be how Castagno represents him. Christ gazes down toward him while Peter looks at Christ with alarm, as if with foreknowledge of his denial of Christ within the next few hours.

Christ's revelation that he would be betrayed, Ludolph wrote, entered the heart of each apostle like a knife and caused each to reflect on his inner life and eventual martyrdom. Here Andrew holds up a knife to the praying Bartholomew, who would eventually be flayed alive. Next to Peter, James, who would be beheaded, gazes fixedly at the glass of wine he holds to his lips, as the locks of his hair seem to start upward from his head. Thomas, who was to receive the Virgin's golden belt as she ascended to heaven (see figs. 5.6, 7.16), looks sharply upward, in a daring attempt at foreshortening. Turning to one another and searching their individual souls, the apostles express their consternation at the disclosure. Castagno, doubtless under theological direction, visually unfolded the import of the Last Supper, the Betrayal, and the Eucharist for the nuns within a single image.

Castagno set the scene in a paneled chamber that seems to be an independent construction, one story high and roofed with Tuscan tiles, with its front wall removed as if it were a stage set. This setting, open to the view of the nuns, is cut off from the rest of the world by high brick walls at either side. The room is on the ground floor, ignoring the biblical text, which states that the event took place in an "upper room." Castagno's illusionistic room is more complex than we first assume. At first it seems square because each side wall has the same number of marble panels as the back wall, but the benches suggest that this could not be the case. Counting the patterns in the frieze and the ceiling tiles does not help resolve the visual paradox, which adds to the intensity of the scene, as does the recession of the red and white pavement in front. The floor is painted as if it were just below our eye level, and at close range its receding blocks, so convincing from a distance, become a blur. The striking impression of three-dimensional reality is, surprisingly, deliberately inaccurate. Castagno did establish a consistent vanishing point for the

ceiling directly below the hands of St. John, but the orthogonals of the footrest do not recede to this point nor, for that matter, to any common vanishing point. The orthogonals of the frieze remain nearly parallel, and the depth of the individual ceiling panels is identical from front to back, with no diminution.

There may have been a reason for such departures from Brunelleschi's and Alberti's rational perspective system on the part of an artist familiar with its practice and theory. If Castagno had used a consistent one-point perspective, he would have restricted the observer to a single point in the refectory; perhaps he intended instead that his illusion be valid to every nun in the room. He did his best, therefore, to achieve a visually and emotionally convincing reality by other means. One of these is the lighting, which seems to come from two windows substituted for marble panels on the left, the same side as the real windows of the refectory. This light emphasizes the broadly modeled features, sends reflected lights into shadows, and models the sharply defined figures and drapery. Strong light and vigorous contours establish a sense of pictorial three-dimensionality that seems to emulate sculptural prototypes at Orsanmichele or the Campanile. In contrast to Castagno's immobile figures is the eruption of color in the painted marble panel behind Christ. The surge and flow of this veining reveals Castagno's interest in the invention of abstract patterns that could strengthen his narrative interpretation.

The dramas of betrayal, resignation, fear of death, crushing grief, and hope of salvation that seem to be going on within the souls of these apostles are revealed on their faces—old and bearded, young and strong, handsome or ugly, tormented or secure. Castagno has chosen to emphasize emotional experience, and in this, as well as in his emphasis on sharp detail, strong lighting effects, and realistic types, his art foreshadows that of Caravaggio (see fig. 20.58).

Castagno's *Last Supper* was painted in thirty-two sections, and perhaps within even fewer working days. He began the figures with Andrew, at the right of center, and worked toward the right, each day painting one figure. Then, in a single day, he painted Christ and the head and hands of Judas. In another day he painted John. He then worked even more rapidly, for James and Peter were painted in a single day, as were Thomas and Philip. Only after the tablecloth was painted did he insert the body of Judas. The harsh grandeur, astringent colors, and powerful spatial illusion make this fresco one of the most memorable of the many Quattrocento representations of this theme.

A cycle of frescoes by Castagno of famous men and women offer a sharp contrast to the *Last Supper* in content and style. They were commissioned in 1448 to decorate the

11.13. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO. The *Famous Men and Women Cycle.* c. 1448–49. Originally in the loggia of the Villa Carducci, Legnaia. Reconstruction by Lew Minter. Fresco, width of loggia, approximately 50' (15.5 m). Commissioned by Filippo Carducci. 1. *Eve*; 2. *Madonna and Child* (over the door; largely lost); 3. *Adam* (largely lost); 4. *Pippo Spano* (see fig. 11.14); 5. *Farinata degli Uberti*; 6. *Niccolò Acciaioli*; 7. *Cumaean Sibyl* (see fig. 11.15); 8. *Queen Esther*; 9. *Queen Tomyris*; 10. *Dante*; 11. *Petrarch*; 12. *Boccaccio* (not shown in reconstruction).

loggia of a villa outside Florence (fig. 11.13). Cycles of famous historical personages were a frequent decoration for Italian Quattrocento villas and palaces, although few survive; such figures were intended to awaken emotions ranging from civic pride to delight in the erudition of observer and patron. The nine figures from the long wall of the Villa Carducci have been detached, while frescoes of Adam and Eve and the Virgin and Child on one end wall remain in poor condition in situ. No one knows what might have gone on the other end wall. Our reconstruction gives some sense of the frescoes as they might have looked in the loggia originally. The unity of Castagno's program is evident. The detached sections show three Florentine military leaders (Pippo Spano, Farinata degli Uberti, and

Niccolò Acciaioli), three legendary women (the Cumaean Sibyl, Queen Esther, and Queen Tomyris), and three Florentine literary figures (Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio). The figures stand against varied backgrounds of simulated marble, granite, or porphyry.

*Pippo Spano* (fig. 11.14), whose real name was Filippo Scolari, was a Florentine soldier of fortune in the service of the king of Hungary. As we have seen, Masolino accompanied him to Hungary (see p. 207), and his will endowed the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence (see fig. 6.20). Pippo died in Hungary shortly after Castagno's birth, so it is unlikely that Castagno's figure is a portrait unless the artist was supplied with a death mask or another likeness. In any case, it is a vivid image of a swashbuckling

**11.14, 11.15. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO.** *Pippo Spano* (left) and *Cumaean Sibyl* (right), from the *Famous Men and Women Cycle* (see fig. 11.13). Frescoes, each 8' × 5'5" (2.5 × 1.54 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. In the figure of *Pippo Spano*, Castagno added blue shadows in *fresco secco* to the short tunic; these have peeled off, leaving the white plaster and causing an apparent reversal of lights and darks.

*condottiere* standing with feet apart, grasping a huge sword, and glaring at potential enemies. The *Cumaean Sibyl* (fig. 11.15) is a tall, athletic, and elegant woman holding a book and pointing heavenward. Because her revelations were thought to predict the coming of Christ, she looks toward the Madonna and Child on the end wall.

While Castagno's figures here are strong and wiry like those in the *Last Supper*, a more diffused light now replaces the strong shadows and harsh modeling seen there. A system of delicately painted lines indicates details of garments and ornament, locks of hair, and even individual hairs in the beard and eyelashes. The different style may have seemed appropriate for the intimacy of the villa setting. Here too the perspective could not possibly be

unified; a consistent one-point perspective would have looked incorrect except from a single spot in the loggia. But Castagno made every effort to make his figures and scenes palpable. The feet, for example, overlap the ledges on which the figures stand and seem to project into the space of the room, while the folds of the hems of the garments, seen from below, recede convincingly into depth.

The shape of Castagno's *Triumph of David* (fig. 11.16) derives from its function as a parade shield, presumably for ceremonial use in processions and other civic and familial festivities. In contrast to Donatello's static figures of *David* (see figs. 7.11, 10.22), Castagno's wiry youth runs, swinging his sling in one hand and extending his other to help guide the trajectory of the stone. Goliath's

11.16. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO. *The Triumph of David, a parade shield*. c. 1450–55. Tempera on leather on poplar, height 45½" (1.155 m). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Widener Collection).

decapitated head lies at his feet. The flutter of his garments in the air and the tense muscles of his legs give a strong sense of arrested movement. This is one of the first figures of the Renaissance to be shown in action, and so impressive is its naturalism that it is a surprise to learn that the stance was probably suggested by an ancient Greek statue—part of a group representing Niobe and her dying children now in the Uffizi. The sculptors of the early decades of the Quattrocento had turned to classical antiquity for their philosopher-saints and for their relatively quiet male and female nudes. Castagno now finds inspiration in ancient art for a pose that demands the total

resources of the body and an expression that conveys David's fear of his gigantic enemy. Despite the patterned hair, stylized clouds, and still-Gothic landscape forms, Castagno's interest in physical movement represents a giant step along the road later taken by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, Leonardo, Michelangelo, and, eventually, the artists of the Baroque era. At the same time, however, it is clear that he has not forgotten Donatello, whose works provided models for Goliath's severed head.

*The Vision of St. Jerome* (fig. 11.17) was frescoed above an altar at the Church of Santissima Annunziata, Florence. Jerome was often represented as a theologian working in a

11.17. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO. *The Vision of St. Jerome*. c. 1454–55. Fresco, 9'9" × 5'10" (3 × 1.8 m). 🏛 SS. Annunziata, Florence. Commissioned by Girolamo dei Corboli.

**11.18. ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO.** *Niccolò da Tolentino.* 1455–56. Fresco transferred to canvas, 27'4" × 16'9" (8.3 × 5.1 m). Cathedral, Florence. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo, Florence.

Ghost in the form of a dove—are so sharply foreshortened that they seem about to glide right out of the picture. The seraphim that cover the lower part of Christ's body were added *a secco* and have partially peeled away. Perhaps Castagno's foreshortened Trinity offended the clergy or the patron, who then demanded this "correction." Yet we still look down on the top of the crossbar, down on Christ's head (crowned with the rope of flagellation, rather than with thorns), down even on his gold halo. The rope may have been included because the patron, Girolamo (Jerome) dei Corboli, belonged to a community of flagellants. One hardly knows whether to be more astonished by the tortured face of the saint, with its knotty features, by the intensity of his inner convulsion, or by the gloomy figure of God the Father. Blood runs from the gashes in Jerome's chest, drips from the rock he holds, and oozes from the pierced side of Christ.

Castagno's equestrian *Niccolò da Tolentino* (fig. 11.18) was commissioned as a pendant to Uccello's *Sir John Hawkwood*; it too was detached and is also now hung too low and with an inappropriate frame. Uccello had already painted Niccolò in the *Battle of San Romano* (see fig. 11.5), and it is not clear why he was not chosen to paint the second simulated statue for the cathedral. In any case, a comparison between the two monuments is inevitable. The simple harmony of Uccello's earlier image is gone; perhaps such qualities were no longer possible in the 1450s. Characteristically for Castagno, the perspective scheme has no single point of view. Harsh contrasts between light and shadow throw into relief the simulated marble of the tomb, its giant balusters, inscriptions, and shell, and the nude youths who hold shields bearing the devices of Niccolò and the Florentine Republic. The convoluted shapes of the horse's muscles, head, and tail and of the rider's cloak produce an effect of movement utterly different from the static geometry of Uccello's work. Castagno's illusion of marble substitutes earth tones for the violet and green used by Uccello to simulate bronze.

Castagno's wife died in August 1457 in one of the recurrent plagues and the artist himself died eleven days later. They were buried, apparently in a mass grave, at Santa Maria Nuova.

## Piero della Francesca

The artist who seems to fulfill the Albertian ideal of absolute and perfect painting in nearly every respect is Piero della Francesca (c. 1415–1492). He was not a Florentine, and, except for occasional visits there, he lived in Borgo Sansepolcro, a Tuscan market town then still a possession of the papal states. Piero's family owned a wholesale leather business, a dyeing establishment, houses, and farms.

study on his translation of the Scriptures (see fig. 15.34), but here Castagno represents him stripped to his undergarment and beating his breast with a rock. The setting—looking like any barren hill to the north of Florence—is meant to suggest the Egyptian desert. Jerome's cardinal's hat rests at his feet. Flanking him are St. Paola and her daughter St. Eustochium, two of his close followers. The Trinity above—the Father holding the Son, and the Holy

11.19. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Baptism of Christ*. Late 1440s–50s. Panel, 66 × 45³/₄" (1.67 × 1.16 m). National Gallery, London. Commissioned by a member of the Graziani family and by the Opera of the Pieve of San Giovanni, Borgo Sansepolcro. This was the central panel of an altarpiece; the side panels and predella were painted later by the Sienese artist Matteo di Giovanni.

In the nineteenth century, Piero's art was treated as an oddity, of interest only to a few scholars who found in it little merit and who saw the artist as standing apart from the mainstream of the Renaissance. Only a new appreciation of form for form's sake in the wake of the revolutionary art of Cézanne and the Cubists led to a fuller understanding of Piero's accomplishments.

The first dated reference to Piero is in 1439, when he was a modestly paid assistant of Domenico Veneziano working on now-lost frescoes in Florence. In 1442 Piero became a member of the Priori (town council) of Borgo Sansepolcro, an office he retained for the rest of his life. This rustic town, set in the barren foothills of the Apennines, may have offered the atmosphere of dignity and calm so evident in Piero's art. His stay in Florence helped him to develop the technical resources, the knowledge of perspective theory, and the particular form, light, and color evident in his work. He must have studied the paintings of Masaccio and, since he seems to have known the art of Castagno, he must have returned to Florence. He may have worked with Domenico again, at Loreto. But in the isolation of Borgo Sansepolcro, he engaged with a series of problems on the subject that seems to have concerned him most: the visual unity of the picture.

In Piero's *Baptism of Christ* (fig. 11.19), the beauty of the landscape setting reveals his command of the developments in naturalism seen earlier in Florentine art; one is reminded of Fra Angelico's *Descent from the Cross* (see fig. 9.2). Christ stands in a glassy stream under a well-pruned tree in a Tuscan landscape; he is up to his ankles in water so clear we can see stones on the bottom. Holding a simple earthenware bowl, St. John steps from the bank to pour water over Christ's head. The three angels recall the classicism and naturalism of the singing boys on Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria* (see figs. 10.16–10.17). The mood of anticipation is in part the result of the stillness of the figures and the balance of the flanking profiles of the Baptist and the angel on the left.

Piero developed a visual relationship between Christ's legs and the cylindrical tree trunk; both seem equally rooted in the earth. In the same way, the foreshortened dove (symbol of the Holy Spirit) and the white clouds are so similar in shape that we have to look a second time to distinguish them. There is no representation of God the Father, not even the hand of God that is sometimes shown in this scene; apparently the blue sky will do. It might be said that Piero was a nature poet who saw revelations or relationships in simple things—the Son in a tree, the Holy Spirit in a cloud, the Father in the sky. Piero's color is slightly bleached, similar to the color in his own countryside, where intense light will not permit bright colors to survive. This white glare models both the smooth forms of Christ's torso,

revealing his thighs through the translucent loincloth, and the figure of a man in the middle distance. As he pulls his garment over his head in preparation for baptism, the man's arms are visible through the white linen.

Beyond the second curve of the stream stand bearded figures wearing bright robes and towering headdresses. They and the terraced hill behind them are reflected in the water, which is as clear as it is bright. Between Christ's hip and the tree trunk we are offered a glimpse of Sansepolcro, its towers touched by light, and of the straight road that runs toward the town of Anghiari, site of the famous battle later painted by Leonardo (see fig. 16.30). Piero has mastered Domenico Veneziano's doctrine of light, using a single brushstroke to represent the sparkle of light on an object, and painting background details freely and without line.

Piero's *Resurrection* (fig. 11.20) was painted for the Town Hall of Borgo Sansepolcro and moved from an adjoining room to its present position in the early sixteenth century; the *di sotto in sù* (looking up from below) viewpoint of the enframing columns suggests that it was originally painted rather high on the wall. The theme was appropriate because the tomb of Christ was the symbol of Sansepolcro (which means "Holy Sepulcher") and appeared on its coat of arms. Piero condensed the scene to its essentials and represented the Resurrection not as a historical event—it is nowhere described in the Gospels—but as a timeless truth upon which one could meditate on any rocky hillside above Sansepolcro.

Christ stands with one foot on the edge of the sarcophagus. One hand rests on his knee while the other grasps the banner of triumph. A cloak leaves his right side bare to reveal the spear wound. The classical torso is modeled by the dawn light coming from the left. Above his pillarlike throat, Christ's face is firmly projected. The curving lips seem to have been carved in pale stone, and his compelling, wide-open eyes engage ours, as if challenging us to return his stare. In front of the tomb, the watchers sleep fitfully; according to Vasari, the second from the left is Piero's self-portrait. The large eye sockets, broad cheekbones, square jaw, and firm chin recall those seen in Etruscan sculpture—features still visible in the inhabitants of Tuscan villages.

Significantly, the trees on the left are barren while those on the right are in full leaf. On his way to Calvary, Christ had said, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31), meaning, "If they do this to me while I am still alive, what will they do when I am dead?" Christ's analogy between green and withered trees was also a reference to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life, which, according to the account in Genesis, stood together in the Garden of Eden.

11.20. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Resurrection*. c. 1458. Fresco, 7'5" × 6'6½" (2.25 × 2 m). Museo Civico (originally the Town Hall), Sansepolcro. Commissioned by the chief magistrates of Sansepolcro for their state chamber.
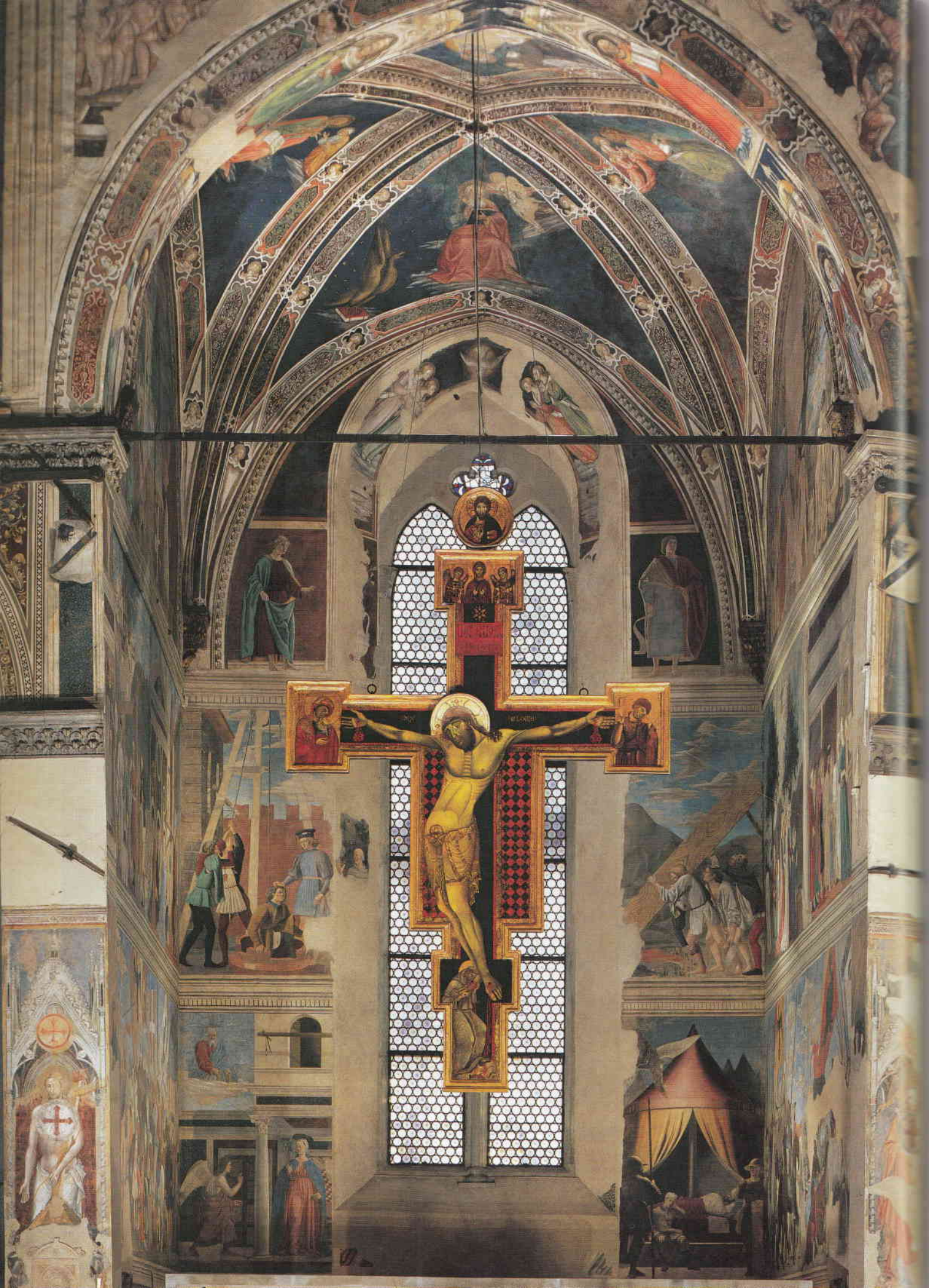
*Left:* 11.21. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. Fresco cycle of the Legend of the True Cross. 1450s; the cycle was begun in the late 1440s and completed by 1465; most of the paintings were probably executed in the early to mid-1450s. S. Francesco, Arezzo. The commission, from members of the Bacci family, had originally been given to one of the last surviving painters in the Gothic tradition, Bicci di Lorenzo, but he left Arezzo around 1447 after completing the *Four Evangelists* in the vault and the *Last Judgment* on the triumphal arch. The thirteenth-century *Crucifix with St. Francis* was only recently hung over the high altar of the church.



MATTHEW

MARK                LUKE

JOHN

TREE OF LIFE

SETH IN
PARADISE
2

EMPEROR HERACLIUS
RETURNS THE CROSS
TO JERUSALEM
15

DEATH OF
ADAM
3

ADAM
DISPATCHES
SETH
1

VIEW OF AREZZO

DISCOVERY OF THE
THREE CROSSES BY
EMPRESS HELENA
11

TESTING OF
THE TRUE CROSS
12

JUDAS BEING
PULLED OUT
OF THE WELL
10

BURIAL OF
THE CROSS
6

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA
PRAYING TO THE TREE
OF LIFE AT THE
RIVER KIDRON
4

MEETING BETWEEN THE
QUEEN OF SHEBA AND
KING SOLOMON
5

BATTLE BETWEEN
EMPEROR
HERACLIUS AND
THE PERSIANS
13

EXECUTION
OF THE PERSIAN
KING CHOSROES
14

EMPEROR CONSTANTINES'S
VICTORY UNDER
THE SIGN OF
THE TRUE CROSS
9

ANNUNCIATION
7

DREAM OF
CONSTANTINE
8

EAST                    SOUTH                    WEST

*Above:* 11.22. Iconographic diagram of the program of Piero della Francesca's Legend of the True Cross frescoes at the S. Francesco, Arezzo. Diagram by Sarah Cameron Loyd.

The *Resurrection* contains evidence of Piero's slow technical procedures. Unlike Castagno, he needed a working day for each face and a day for the torso, neck, and right arm of Christ. He seems to have spent more than a decade on his only major fresco cycle, at San Francesco in Arezzo (figs. 11.21–11.22). Piero often applied wet cloths to the plaster at night so that he could work two days on a single section. A study of the *giornate* in the chancel at San Francesco indicates that the actual painting could have been completed within two years. The preliminary calculations, working drawings, and cartoons may have required more time than the actual painting. Piero had at least two assistants, but the designs are all his own and he also painted all the principal figures. Exactly why the cycle took so many years to finish is uncertain.

The subject, the Legend of the True Cross, is a medieval fabrication of fantastic complexity. Piero was certainly familiar with Agnolo Gaddi's cycle on the same theme at

Santa Croce in Florence (see figs. 3.19, 5.11). The tale begins with the final illness of Adam, who, an angel tells his son Seth, can be cured only by a branch from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil from which Eve took the apple. Seth returns from Eden to find Adam already dead, but the branch is planted on his grave, where it takes root and flourishes. Later, King Solomon desires to use a beam from this tree in the construction of his palace, but it proves too large and is instead placed bridging a brook. The queen of Sheba, gifted with prophecy, discovers it on her trip to Solomon's court and recognizes that it will serve to produce a cross on which the greatest of kings will hang. Kneeling, she worships it before proceeding onward to tell King Solomon, who has it buried deep in the earth.

The Crucifixion was not represented by Piero, apparently because it was commemorated in the Mass celebrated at the altar in the chapel. Piero's depiction shifts to the period after the Crucifixion, to the struggle between the rival emperors Constantine and Maxentius. An angel appears to Constantine in a dream, saying, "In this sign thou shalt conquer." Protected by his faith in the cross, Constantine vanquishes Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge. Helena, Constantine's mother, sets out to find the True Cross, which—along with those of the two thieves—was buried after the Crucifixion. The person who knows the location reveals it only after he has been lowered into a dry well and starved. When the three crosses are dug up,

they show no external differences and the True Cross cannot be identified. Luckily a funeral procession is passing by, and when the crosses are held over the corpse, only the True Cross revives him. Later, the True Cross falls into the hands of the Persian emperor Chosroes, who attaches it to his throne, but the Byzantine emperor Heraclius defeats Chosroes in battle and brings the cross in triumph back to Jerusalem.

Piero's sense of order was equal to the challenges of this complex program, and he rearranged episodes to make analogous scenes face each other. For example, Piero paired on facing walls the scenes dominated by women (the queen of Sheba and the empress Helena; figs. 11.23–11.24) and those of battles won by emperors (see figs. 11.25–11.26), while on either side of the window he placed visions of the cross (see figs. 11.27–11.28). As a result, the final cycle forms a visual harmony rather than a temporal sequence, although the order of the scenes has also been related to the demands of Franciscan liturgy.

Piero divided the story of the queen of Sheba (fig. 11.23) into two episodes: at the left, the queen worships the wood of the cross; at the right she is received at Solomon's palace. In the first episode horses are shown foreshortened from front and rear in the manner of Gentile da Fabriano and Masaccio (see figs. 8.2, 8.19). In the foreground the beam of the True Cross is placed across a brook that runs past the palace. The shadow of the kneeling queen that



**11.23. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA.** *Discovery of the Wood of the True Cross* and *Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba,* from the Legend of the True Cross. 1450s. 11'8" × 24'6" (3.56 × 7.47 m). The second face from the left in the scene of the *Meeting*, staring directly at the spectator, is probably Piero's self-portrait.

falls across the beam follows the direction of the light from the actual window of the chancel. Her garments and those of her ladies-in-waiting are relatively plain, while their hair is simply dressed and they wear few jewels. The dignity of these stately women is due not only to the carriage of their heads, the coolness of their gaze, and the authority of their gestures, but also to the simplicity of Piero's forms and lines. The heads with their plucked foreheads and the long necks resemble perfect geometric forms, while the folds of the cloaks descend in grand parabolic curves.

The second episode takes place in the classical architecture of Solomon's palace, and here we must discuss the relation of Piero della Francesca to Leonbattista Alberti. The proportions of the composite order of Piero's portico recall those of Alberti's Malatesta Temple at Rimini (see fig. 10.4), where Piero had painted a frescoed portrait of Sigismondo Malatesta in Alberti's temple in 1451. He may also have absorbed Alberti's perspective doctrine in Florence, and many years later Piero wrote the first Renaissance treatise devoted exclusively to perspective (see p. 293).

Piero has set his vanishing point low, on a level with the eyes of the kneeling queen of the first episode; it is centered just outside the portico, so that some of the capitals are visible along the profile of the first column. Within the portico, we see the same queen and ladies, their heads drawn from the same cartoons but now reversed, a technique employed by Piero to achieve balance and regularity. A sumptuously dressed Solomon, whose gold-brocaded ceremonial robe was painted *a secco* and has for the most part peeled away, receives them.

In the companion piece on the opposite wall (fig. 11.24), there are again two episodes: at the left is the *Invention of the True Cross* (as the cross's discovery is generally entitled), in which Empress Helena—her face line for line the same as that of the queen of Sheba—directs the excavation of the crosses. This takes place outside the gates of Jerusalem, which is recognizable as a portrait of Arezzo; the cathedral can be distinguished, and—at the extreme right—the side of San Francesco itself.

The *Recognition of the True Cross* to the right is dominated by a remarkable design for a Renaissance church façade. What makes this surprising is that Piero could not have seen a single completed Renaissance church façade. Nonetheless, Alberti's ideas are evident in Piero's creation, which is divided into rectangular, circular, and semicircular areas, with the arches supported on piers. There is a dichotomy between the simplicity of the design and the veined marbles that form the ornamentation. Piero is also aware of the distinctions between historical styles for, above a street bordered with Tuscan houses, are a Romanesque *campanile*, two medieval house-towers, and a dome culminating in a circular temple-lantern based on Brunelleschi's lantern for his Sacristy at San Lorenzo in



11.24. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Invention of the True Cross* and *Recognition of the True Cross*, from the Legend of the True Cross. 1450s. 11'8" × 24'6" (3.56 × 7.47 m).

11.25. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Battle of Constantine and Maxentius,* from the Legend of the True Cross. 1450s. 10'9" × 25'1" (3.29 × 7.64 m).

Florence (see fig. 6.16). In front of these disparate yet harmonious architectural forms, Piero has placed his kneeling figures, while the cross is projected toward us above the brilliantly lit torso of the man brought back to life by its power.

In Piero's solemn battle scenes, the realities of conflict, defeat, and death are deeply felt. At the same time, he chose to contrast the battle scenes sharply: while Constantine defeated Maxentius through the cross alone (fig. 11.25), Heraclius defeated Chosroes in hand-to-hand combat (fig. 11.26). In the damaged *Battle of Constantine and Maxentius,* Piero depicted the army of Constantine advancing from the left while at the right Maxentius and his troops are in rout. If Piero had painted the Tiber—where the battle took place—at its proper scale, he would have had to reduce the figures to miniature size; instead he inserted a symbolic river, painting it as the narrow upper Tiber that flows by Sansepolcro, mirroring trees and farmhouses and providing a haven for three white ducks. His horses approach the edge, stare at the water, and paw the air while—against the blue morning sky—Constantine holds a tiny white cross. Patterns are created by the cylindrical forms of the horses' legs and by the lances against the sky. While the banners of the defeated army, identified by dragons and Moors' heads, are in disarray, the imperial eagle on its yellow banner floats triumphantly over Constantine's army.

Constantine wears a sharp-visored hat and bears the features of the Byzantine emperor John Palaeologus, the penultimate successor of Constantine, whom Piero must have seen in Florence in 1439. The emperor on his white horse is overlapped by a figure in armor so that we see only his head in profile and his outstretched hand. Piero painted armor as surfaces of polished steel that capture the morning light.

For these battle scenes Piero chose a point of view level with the riders' feet, so that we look slightly upward to the belly of the rearing horse at the left. The horse is foreshortened and seems to look at us as his rider tries to control him. This device, coupled with the roundness of the modeling throughout, creates an illusion of depth that helps break up the procession of equestrian figures across the foreground.

The *Battle of Heraclius and Chosroes* has little of the luminary magic of the *Battle of Constantine and Maxentius,* perhaps because it is situated on a wall that never receives direct light. Piero includes no landscape, concentrating instead on the battle. He may have been guided in part by Roman battle sarcophagi, seen in Florence and Pisa, in which the compositional field is filled with interwoven figures in conflict; the motif of the horse rearing over a fallen enemy is common in Roman sculpture. As mentioned above (see p. 280), one of the most celebrated military encounters of Piero's day, the Battle of Anghiari, took place within sight of Borgo Sansepolcro in 1440. By that year Piero may have returned to his birthplace; in any case, he could hardly have avoided hearing eyewitness accounts of the struggle.

11.26. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Battle of Heraclius and Chosroes*, from the Legend of the True Cross. 1450s. 10'9" × 24'6" (3.29 × 7.47 m).

In his depiction of this episode Piero represented the grim mechanics of slaughter: there are no beautiful patterns, no lovely light, and the armor has little allure. The legs of horses and people fill the lower part of the composition; above, masses of steel and flesh collide. There are incidents of brutality, as when a soldier near the throne jabs his dagger into the throat of another, or of pathos, as we watch the dying figure below the rearing horse. The dethroned monarch on the far right awaits the executioner's sword. Above him the True Cross is blasphemously incorporated into his throne.

Some scholars have tried to show that the *Annunciation* (fig. 11.27), at the lower left of the chancel window, is really a vision of Empress Helena; others have claimed that the scene is out of place in the True Cross Legend and was inserted later. It can be argued, however, that certain aspects of the subject, as well as its relevance to the legend, are clarified by St. Antoninus. To the right is the open door of Mary's bedchamber, complete with a bed decorated with complex *intarsia*; to the left is the *porta clausa*. Antoninus suggested that the cross was mystically identified with the *porta clausa*, arguing that the *porta clausa* was the way to salvation and that when Christ said, "Narrow is the gate and straight the way that leads unto salvation," he meant the cross. To Antoninus the cross was therefore already symbolically present at the Annunciation. Perhaps Piero hints at this, for the picture seems to be based on a cruciform scheme. Instead of the customary lily, Gabriel holds a palm, symbol of eternal life. The figure of

Mary seems to be illuminated by light from the real window of the chancel. In this simple composition, with its shades of rose, blue, and white in combination with the richness of the veined marble, Piero has expressed the mystery of Christianity as revealed by the miracle of light.

To the right of the window, the cross makes Constantine emperor, also through light. The *Vision of Constantine* (fig. 11.28) has its ancestry in the luminary revelations of Taddeo Gaddi and Gentile da Fabriano (see figs. 3.30, 8.3). Constantine's tent fills the scene, and behind it stand others, two of which are touched by moonlight. The parted curtains show the emperor asleep in his bed, on the base of which sits a sleepy servant. A guard armed with a lance looks toward Constantine; another looks outward. An angel appears over the group, flying downward, his right shoulder obscuring his head, and his extended right arm holding a tiny golden cross. This must be the source for the light that illuminates the figures and the tent and even shines through the feathers of the angel's wing. No one seems to notice this miraculous radiance. As in the *Annunciation*, the cross is also implicit in the picture's construction, and the shapes of the two scenes subtly correspond, pillar for pillar, horizontal for horizontal. Male and female, day and night, the cycle comes in these last two scenes to its fulfillment.

Evidence suggests that Piero traveled widely. He seems to have worked in Ferrara at the court of the Este dukes, and he certainly left a mark on the Ferrarese school. In 1459 he painted a fresco (now lost) in the Vatican, and he

11.27, 11.28. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Annunciation* (left) and *Vision of Constantine* (right), from the Legend of the True Cross. 1450s. 10'9" × 6'4" (3.29 × 1.93 m) and 10'9" × 6'3" (3.29 × 1.9 m).

may have visited Rome earlier. But Piero's strongest ties outside Sansepolcro were with the neighboring mountain principality of Urbino, then ruled by Count Federico da Montefeltro, who was elevated to duke in 1474. Urbino's territory was not rich in resources and the count's revenues were small, but he came from a family of long military traditions. His talents were valued by the popes, who made him captain general of the Roman Church and relied on his aid in warfare against rebels, including Sigismondo Malatesta. Young men came from as far away as England to Federico's palace to study the art of war and to acquaint themselves with the principles of noble conduct and gentlemanly behavior. Under his rule, Urbino became less a second Sparta, as might have been expected, than a tiny

Athens. Federico was a scholar and bibliophile who surrounded himself with humanists, philosophers, poets, and artists, and under his successors the cultural pre-eminence of Urbino lasted well into the seventeenth century. Federico's palace, a brilliant example of Renaissance architecture (see fig. 14.29), contained many important works of art.

Piero's *Flagellation of Christ* (fig. 11.29) is now in Urbino but there is no evidence that it was painted for Federico or any other citizen of the city. The original meaning and function of this compelling painting remain mysterious; more than thirty different interpretations have been published, but none has been accepted by a large number of scholars.

The setting is the portico of Pontius Pilate's palace in Jerusalem, and Piero seems to have based details of his setting on descriptions of the palace and surrounding structures in Jerusalem. What has perplexed many observers is the placing of Christ and his tormentors at a distance, while three large figures who seem to have no involvement with what is going on in the other half of the picture dominate the foreground. Crucial is the vanished inscription "Convenerunt in unum" ("They came together as one"), which was recorded in the early nineteenth century as being near the group of three figures or on the frame. The words appear in Psalm 2:2 and are quoted in a slight variation in Acts 4:26: "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ." In fifteenth-century breviaries, where this verse is one of the Antiphons read on Good Friday, it is followed by a passage from Acts 4:27 that refers to the trial of Jesus and names both Herod and Pilate. It has often been suggested that Piero's picture refers allegorically to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 or, if the painting is slightly earlier, to the threat of that capture in the years preceding the city's fall. The capture of Constantinople, a city founded more than a millennium earlier by the Roman emperor who had first allowed the free practice of Christianity, was seen as a great blow to the Church; because theologians often referred to the Church as the mystical body of Christ, the loss of Constantinople could easily be symbolized by the Flagellation.

An old tradition in Urbino identified the youthful, barefoot figure in the group on the right, clothed only in a plain red garment, as Duke Oddantonio, Federico's half-brother, who was murdered in his nightshirt. The figure has also been identified as a wingless angel. The figure at the right has the red mantle of a nobleman thrown over his right



11.29. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Flagellation of Christ*. 1450s(?). Panel, 23¼ × 32" (60 × 80 cm). Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino.

shoulder and may be a portrait of Duke Guidantonio, father of Federico and Oddantonio; other interpretations identify him as Francesco Sforza or Ludovico II Gonzaga. Pilate, who observes the torture from his throne, is thought to be a portrait of Sultan Mehmet II, who conquered Constantinople (see fig. 15.33). In all likelihood, then, the remaining man in the foreground is a portrait as well. Bearded in the Byzantine fashion, he also wears a Byzantine hat. He gazes earnestly outward, and his mouth is open in speech as he gestures to his two companions. We are led to conclude that both the suffering of Christ, placed as deep in space as the Flagellation is remote in time, and the contemporary events it symbolizes are the subject of his discourse. Perhaps the speaker was a Greek scholar at the court of Urbino who is here expounding the meaning of the Flagellation in a contemporary context.

Deep in the portico Christ stands calmly, awaiting the blows about to fall on him from men in Turkish dress. He is bound to a column surmounted by a golden sculpture of a nude man, which has been identified as an allegorical figure representing the sun, one of the principal monuments of Constantinople; if this identification is correct, its presence would also suggest the idolatry of those who are persecuting Christ. In its left hand the figure holds what seems to be a colossal pearl. This unexpected and unexplained form seems to be providing the light illuminating the ceiling above Christ. If Federico was the patron, the picture may have been intended to embody his desire to serve as captain general of the forces of the Church in liberating the Holy Land and Constantinople, the holy city of the East, and to earn the ducal mantle of his predecessors.

The architectural setting has been constructed with such accuracy that modern scholars have been able to play Piero's perspective backward, so to speak, and reconstruct the ground plan of the marble floor. Not surprisingly, this exercise has demonstrated that Piero organized his spatial illusion using precise mathematical principles. The orthogonals are projected from divisions in the base line, as Alberti suggested, but Piero has intentionally placed the point of view slightly below the figures' hips rather than at eye level, as Alberti recommended. As a consequence, the foreground figures loom grandly and their dialogue becomes more important. The architectural details have been articulated with even greater refinement than those in the frescoes at Arezzo. The steps visible behind Pilate surely represent the staircase used by Christ in Pilate's palace; what was believed to be this staircase was later brought to Rome for veneration, where it is known as the Scala Santa.

Both outside and inside the portico, Piero's sunlight reflects from the snowy marbles, penetrates the deep-toned slabs of onyx and porphyry, and creates tones of blue and rose, red and gold, that suffuse the whites in the indirect illumination of the shelter. Lavenders and blues make up the shadows in the white garments of the turbaned man who stands with his back to us. All in all, the interlocking web of form, space, light, and color represents Piero's most nearly perfect single achievement. If the Albertian ideal of "absolute and perfect painting" could be embodied in a single picture, this would be an appropriate candidate. Piero signed the panel conspicuously, but why he chose the lowest step of Pilate's throne for the signature is uncertain. The enigma of this unusual painting, with its combination of subordinate narrative scene and foreground dialogue, will undoubtedly continue to perplex scholars.

In July 1472, Federico's wife Battista Sforza, who had governed Urbino capably during his frequent absences, died in her twenty-sixth year, six months after the birth of her ninth child and first son, Federico's long-expected heir, Guidobaldo. Federico stopped all work on his palace and began construction of the church of San Bernardino across the valley from Urbino, a structure that is visible in the background of Raphael's *Madonna* (see fig. 16.48). For this church he commissioned Piero to paint a *Madonna and Child with Saints* (fig. 11.30). The Albertian setting is brilliantly projected; the picture was probably intended to have a marble frame with matching architectural membering. On the right kneels Federico, wearing a suit of armor from which he has removed helmet and gauntlets, and behind him stands his patron saint, John the Evangelist, but the place before St. John the Baptist on the left, where Battista Sforza should be kneeling, is evocatively vacant. The rose and gold brocade of the Virgin's tunic is repeated in Federico's cape, and her blue mantle is decorated with pearls painted with almost Flemish detail. From the shell of the apse, half in shadow and half in light, hangs an egg suspended by a silver cord. Throughout the picture, stillness reigns.

So exact is Piero's perspective that the size of the egg can be measured, revealing that it is an ostrich egg. Such eggs often hung over altars dedicated to the Virgin—one still hangs in the Baptistery of Florence, and others appear in works by Giovanni Bellini and Andrea Mantegna (see figs. 15.1, 15.19)—for it was believed that the ostrich let her egg hatch in the sunlight without brooding it herself and thus, following medieval logic, the ostrich egg became a symbol of the Virgin Birth. It was also believed that the ostrich subsisted on a diet of nails, nuts, bolts, screws, and other hardware appropriate for a soldier, and it therefore appeared on Federico's coat of arms. Finally, the ostrich was an absent mother, and therefore a symbol of the deceased Battista.

The backs of Piero's portraits of Federico and Battista (fig. 11.31) are painted with allegories of triumphs (fig. 11.32) and humanist texts that extol their virtues; unfortunately no evidence survives to suggest how double-sided

11.30. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Madonna and Child with Saints.* Mid-1470s. Panel, 98 × 67" (2.48 × 1.7 m). Brera Gallery, Milan. Commissioned by Federico da Montefeltro for S. Bernardino, Urbino.

portraits such as these might have been displayed (the current frame is not the original). The ducal mantle worn by Federico in the triumph scene seems to date the panels after September 1474, when he was elevated to his long-desired rank (he does not wear the mantle in the *Madonna and Child with Saints*), but by that date Battista had been dead for more than two years. Both Piero and Francesco Laurana, who created a bust of Battista at about this same time (see fig. 14.28), must have worked from the still-extant death mask.

Motionless and with chins silhouetted against the sky above the horizon, the portrait heads create an effect of grandeur. Piero's cool light plays full on the pale skin of Battista, but leaves that of Federico somewhat in shadow. Federico's profile, disfigured by a sword blow in a tournament that cost him his right eye and the bridge of his nose, was done using the same cartoon as the portrait in the *Madonna*. His olive skin is set against Battista's pallor, his

low-set red hat and tunic against her fashionably high forehead, blonde hair, and jewels. Her pearls concentrate the radiance of the landscape and sky in a chain of lucent globes that deliberately contrast with the square, gray towers of the city beyond. Every element of luxury in the veil and jewels has, however, been subordinated to the sense of order that dominates both portraits and Piero's work in general.

The profiles of Federico and Battista are set against continuous landscapes that surely refer to the extent of their realm. The city in Battista's portrait is probably Gubbio, the second city of the Montefeltro domain, where Battista had taken her children during the construction of the palace in Urbino, where she gave birth to Guidobaldo, and where she died. Piero has set himself new problems in the landscapes. His representation of atmospheric perspective makes us aware of how the veil of atmosphere, which even in a Tuscan summer contains some moisture, softens the
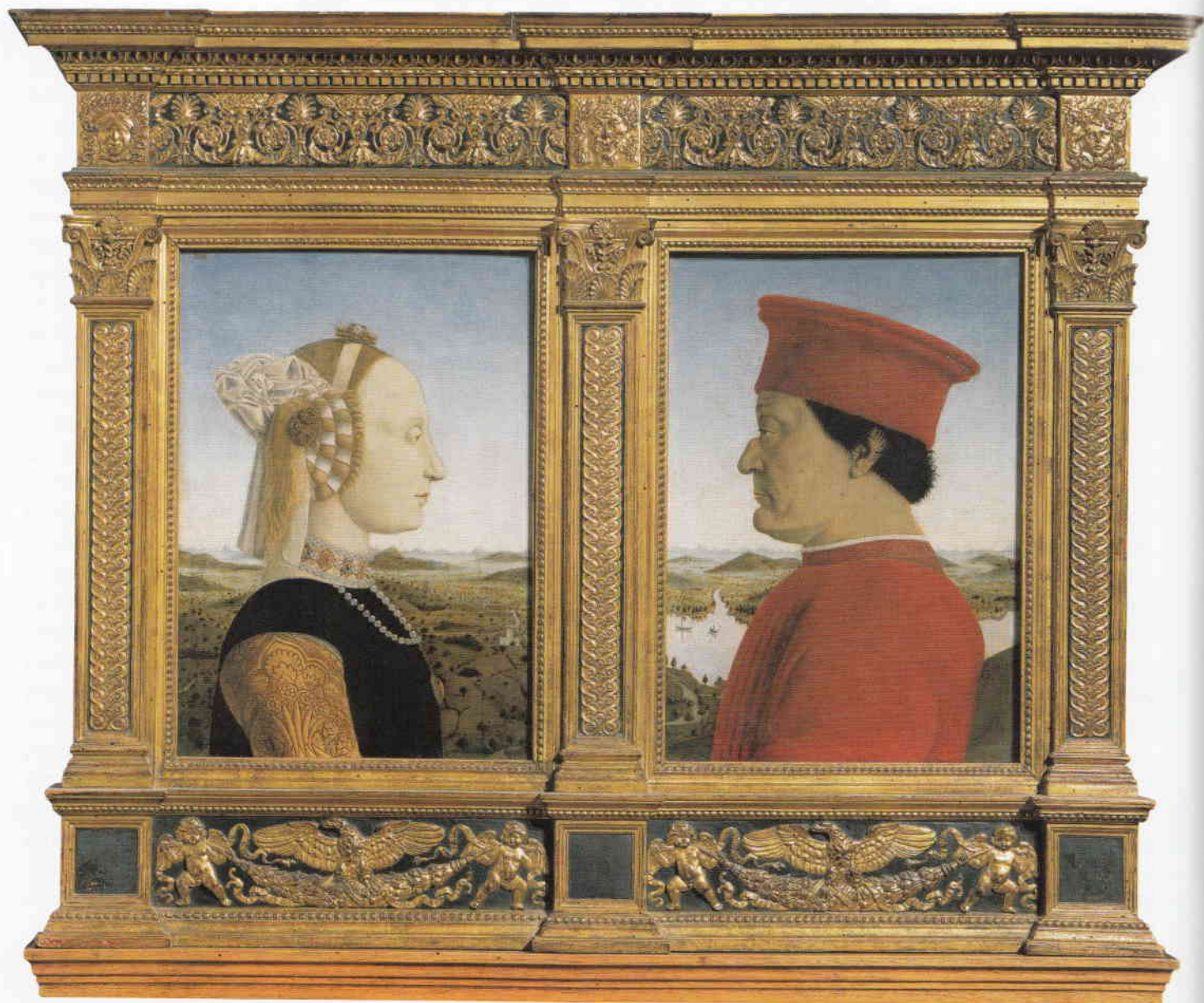
11.31. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Battista Sforza* and *Federico da Montefeltro*. c. 1474. Panel, each 18½ × 13" (47 × 33 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned by Federico da Montefeltro. Federico would later be immortalized in Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528).

contours of forms as they recede. But these expanses, so strangely formed, may have a second, more important, purpose. Piero seems to have been in touch with the scientific currents of his time and may well have known the work of his Tuscan contemporary Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli, who believed the world was round and made the map that started Columbus on his voyage. Perhaps Piero's continuous plains were intended to reflect this proposition. Below the allegorical triumphs on the reverse are Latin inscriptions in Roman capitals. Federico's refers to the "fame of his virtues" and asserts that he is the equal of the greatest leaders. Battista is mentioned in the

past tense; her personal fame and leadership are never acknowledged, but she is "honored by the praise of the accomplishments of her great husband." In the allegories, triumphal cars driven by *putti* approach each other, the car of Federico drawn by horses, that of Battista by unicorns, symbols of chastity and fidelity respectively. Fortune crowns Federico. On his car sit Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance. Standing by Battista, who is shown reading a prayerbook, are Chastity and Modesty, and seated on the front of her car are Charity and Faith. The colors of costumes and armor resonate against the landscape, where a lake amid olive-colored hills and valleys
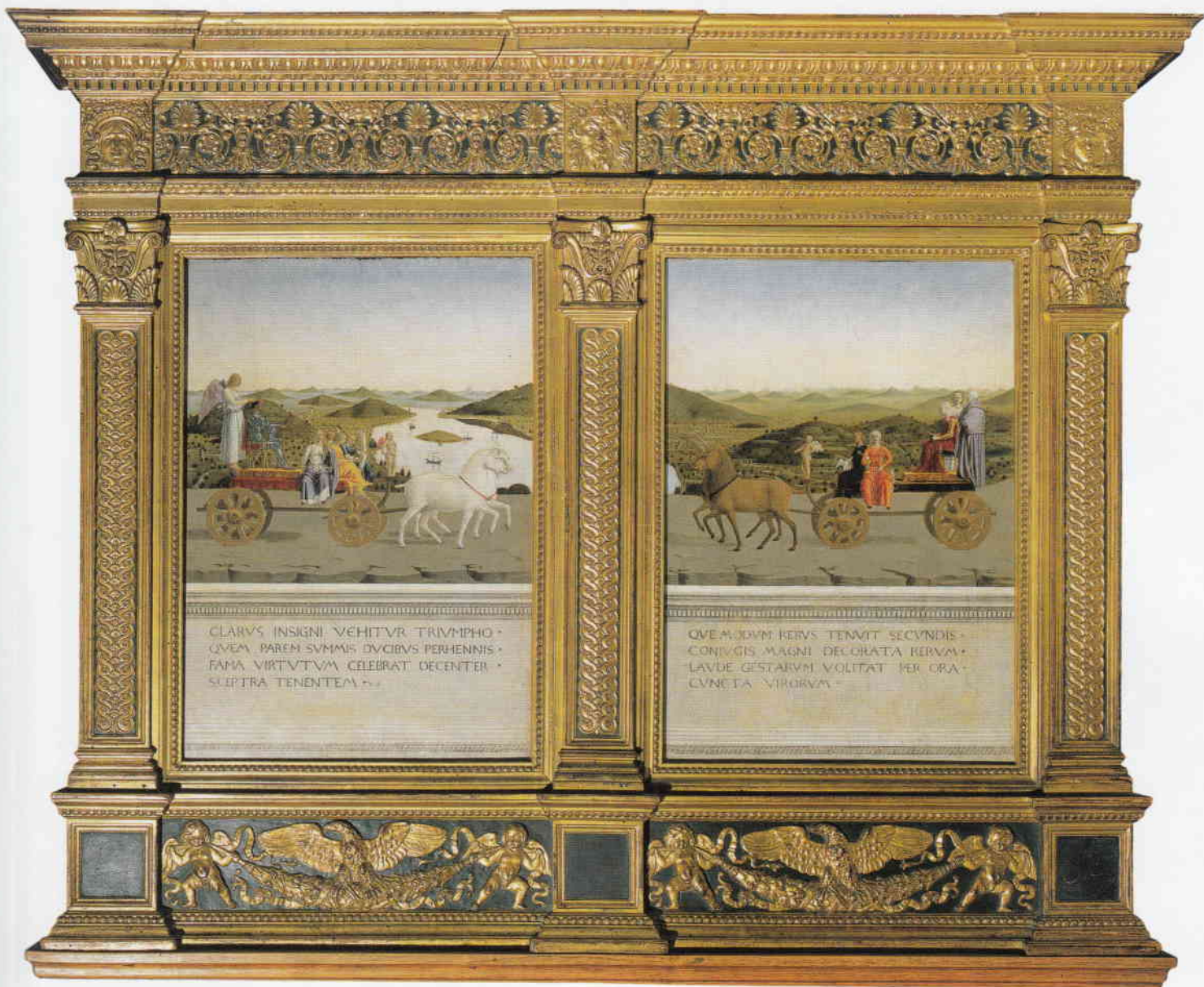
11.32. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. *Triumph of Federico da Montefeltro* and *Triumph of Battista Sforza* (reverse of fig. 11.31).

reflects the sky. The luminous atmosphere and soft colors are similar to effects found in the art of Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, whose works were known in Italy at this time. It seems likely that some of Piero's luminary effects were created using oil glazes in the Flemish style, a technique he used elsewhere.

Piero lived on for nearly two decades more but seems to have moved away from painting in favor of his studies on perspective and mathematics. His principal theoretical works are preserved in his own handwriting and include *De prospectiva pingendi* (*On Painting in Perspective*), in which he treats a series of problems in perspective as propositions in Euclidean style, and *De quinque corporibus regolaribus* (*On the Five Regular Bodies*), a study of geometry. According to Vasari, the aged Piero was blind, and in the mid-sixteenth century a man still lived who claimed that, as a boy, he had led Piero about Borgo Sansepolcro by the hand. This story's validity has been doubted, but it may well contain more than a grain of truth even though in 1490, two years before his death, Piero still wrote in a clear and beautiful hand. Writing with the aid of a magnifying glass might have been possible for an artist who could not see well enough to paint panels and frescoes.

# ART IN FLORENCE UNDER THE MEDICI I

<span style="font-variant:small-caps">D</span>uring the first half of the Quattrocento, there were variations of manner, taste, and content, but no basic stylistic conflicts among the revolutionary Florentine artists. We might imagine these architects, sculptors, and painters as a band of hardy conspirators—let us say the heroic artists of Nanni di Banco's *Four Crowned Martyrs* (see fig. 7.15)—united against the entrenched Gothic style. By the 1430s the outcome of the struggle was no longer in doubt. The major commissions were awarded to the innovators, and artists who adhered to the Gothic style were forced to seek commissions in small towns or such still-Gothic centers as Milan or Venice. By the middle of the Quattrocento in Florence, furniture, textiles, metalwork, and ceramics had all been transformed by Renaissance taste. Florentine *botteghe* turned out birth salvers, painted chests, processional banners, shields, and bridles in the new style. Some also painted reliefs made by sculptors and produced outdoor tabernacles and altarpieces for village churches, using ideas and motifs borrowed from the revolutionary painters, sometimes even by means of stencils.

In the 1450s, just when the Renaissance style was beginning to seem standard—much as Giotto's had in the 1320s and 1330s—a rift appeared that widened within a few years. Soon there was no longer a single dominant style but several almost equally important styles that were in sharp contrast to each other and, in general, to the style practiced by the immediate followers of Masaccio, Donatello, and the other Early Renaissance innovators. For the next fifty years these contrasting and sometimes conflicting currents characterized Florentine art.

By 1450, Brunelleschi, Masaccio, Nanni di Banco, and Jacopo della Quercia were all dead. After the installation of the *Gates of Paradise* in 1452, Ghiberti retired to his farm to live the life of a country squire. Fra Angelico was at work on a series of small panels that emphasized personal religious and artistic introspection. Alberti, Fra Filippo Lippi, and Piero della Francesca were active outside Florence and so, until 1454, was Donatello. On his return, Donatello's style, affected by the terrible events of the time, took a strange and, we might say, shocking turn.

We have already seen that the plague of 1448 had serious consequences for Florence and Rome (see p. 236); moreover, it kept returning. The humanist pope Nicholas V, who had once been a university companion of Alberti, fled Rome to the safety of Fabriano, which papal soldiers then sealed, forbidding further access. In Florence, St. Antoninus organized house-to-house efforts to aid the sick, bring the last rites to the dying, and bury the dead. In 1453, other events increased the tension. Stefano Porcari, a Roman noble, led a conspiracy to assassinate the pope at High Mass on Easter Sunday. Halley's Comet, considered a harbinger of disaster, hung over Europe that summer. Earthquakes shook

*Opposite:* 12.1. BENOZZO GOZZOLI. Fresco cycle. 1459. The Medici Chapel, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence (see figs. 6.25, 12.24). Probably commissioned by Piero de' Medici. The ceiling of the chapel is elaborately carved and gilded and the floor is inlaid with red, white, and green marbles. In the fifteenth century the chapel was described by Filarete as "most nobly painted by the hand of a good and excellent Florentine master named Benozzo."

central Italy, especially Florence, many of whose inhabitants slept outdoors for a month. And the most frightening piece of news hit Western Europe when the last citadel of the Greek Orthodox Church, Constantinople, fell to the Turks.

In time Florence recovered, and in 1454 the Peace of Lodi put an end to most armed conflict in northern Italy and brought the illusion of restored tranquillity. But something seems to have happened to the Florentines. On the surface, the government of Cosimo de' Medici, although it suffered serious challenges, continued to work well enough. The procedure for choosing those who held public office in Florence was simple: names of citizens were drawn randomly from leather purses. However, Cosimo and his sons controlled the system from behind the scenes by ensuring that only the names of citizens approved by the Medici party were placed in the purses. Cosimo also tried to guarantee that his chief enemies, or individuals of whom he disapproved for one reason or another, were so heavily taxed that they fled Florence; one victim of this practice was the humanist Giannozzo Manetti.

Under such circumstances it might be assumed that the Medici bank and allied commercial establishments would flourish, but the opposite was the case. Perhaps because Cosimo paid little attention to banking, perhaps as part of a Europe-wide decline in business in the second half of the fifteenth century, the Medici bank gradually closed its European branches, and the volume of its transactions declined precipitously. Yet the splendor of the Medici family, emulated by those who sought their favor, took little account of the weakening of its financial base. Florentine architects, sculptors, painters, and artisans were kept busy designing, building, and decorating family palaces and the villas (often converted farmhouses) the Medici established in the countryside (see fig. 12.20).

A Medici inventory made in 1492 reveals the objects and works of art they had collected over the course of the century, including sculptures by Donatello, gold objects for use in the liturgy, coins, cameos, gems, medals, and other pieces. The most highly valued were ancient gems, cameos, and vessels carved in stone. Among the most famous of these was a carved stone goblet, now known as the "Farnese Cup" (*Tazza Farnese*; fig. 12.2), which Lorenzo acquired in 1471. To claim ownership of such vessels, Lorenzo had his initials carved into the surface. The addition of the letters was difficult and could have damaged the ancient works, but putting the Medici stamp of ownership on these rare objects was apparently considered worth the risk. As Lorenzo's brother-in-law, Bernardo Rucellai, wrote, "Witness the letters inscribed on the gems themselves, displaying the name of Lorenzo, whose carving he charged to be done, for his own sake and that of his family, as a future memorial for posterity of his royal splendor."

Cosimo, an amateur architect in his own right, was succeeded in 1464 by his sickly son, Piero the Gouty, whose taste for refinement and luxury was, it seems, rapidly satisfied by artists. Piero's successor in 1469 was his son Lorenzo "the Magnificent." At the time, magnificence was seen as a virtue because it implied liberal support—intellectual and financial—for one's city and its institutions. This was certainly the case for Lorenzo de' Medici. In addition, the term magnificence may also refer to the high level of culture that Lorenzo supported and in which he participated; one of the humanists of the time, Marsilio Ficino, even compared Lorenzo's musical abilities to those of Apollo. With his pro-Medicean bias, Giorgio Vasari wrote later that this period was "a golden age for men of talent."



12.2. Carved Hellenistic goblet with an allegorical scene of the Ptolemaic dynasty, known today as the "Farnese cup" (*Tazza Farnese*). 1st century BCE. Sardonyx, diameter 7⅞" (20 cm). National Archeological Museum, Naples.
Before it was owned by Lorenzo the Magnificent, this cameo and 820 others were owned by Pietro Barbo, who later became Pope Paul II. The outside features a representation of the Gorgon's Head. In the Medici inventory of 1492 this cup is valued at 10,000 florins, a hundred times the price of the altarpiece Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo painted for the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal, a copy of which is visible in fig. 12.13.

12.3. GIOVANNI DI SER GIOVANNI (CALLED SCHEGGIA). Birth salver (*Desco da Parto*) with *The Triumph of Fame*. c. 1449. Tempera, silver, and gold on wood; overall, with engaged frame, diameter 36½" (92.7 cm); painted surface, diameter 24⅝" (62.5 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The frame is original, and the reverse is decorated with Medici references (a diamond ring and the motto SEMPER ["always"]) and with the coats of arms of the Medici and Tornabuoni families. The patron is unknown, but this work was probably commissioned by Piero de' Medici.

Lorenzo's importance for Florentine art and culture had, in fact, been predicted in a large *tondo* featuring *The Triumph of Fame* (fig. 12.3) painted to celebrate his birth. It was hanging near his bedroom when he died in the Medici Palace in 1492. This is only one of many examples of such two-sided *tondi* painted for Florentine families, although exactly how they were used is still uncertain. The theme chosen for Lorenzo's *tondo* was derived from the *Triumphs* of Petrarch and Boccaccio's *The Vision of Love*. Trumpets announce the arrival of Fame from the globe on which the allegorical figure stands, and knights arrive to honor her. She holds a sword and a figure of a cupid to indicate that fame can be accomplished through arms and love. The feathers on the frame are a reference to Lorenzo's father, Piero the Gouty, and the reverse of the *tondo* features other references to the Medici and to the family of Lorenzo's mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni.

The Medici control of governmental affairs in Florence did not go unchallenged. In 1478, Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano were attacked. The conspirators, encouraged by Pope Sixtus IV and members of the papal curia to overthrow the Medici, included members of the Pazzi family; as a result the attack became known as the Pazzi Conspiracy. The attackers struck during the most sacred moment of Sunday Mass in the Duomo, when Lorenzo and Giuliano were without bodyguards. Giuliano died, stabbed nineteen times, but Lorenzo, lightly wounded, escaped by fleeing into the sacristy and slamming Luca della Robbia's bronze doors shut behind him (see figs. 10.18, 2.39). More than seventy of the perpetrators were captured and hanged from the windows of the Palazzo dei Priori and the Bargello. Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci were commissioned, perhaps by Lorenzo de' Medici, to paint portraits of some of these men, including the archbishop of Pisa, on the exterior walls of the Florentine Customs House. These now-lost portraits showed the men hanging by the neck, with one conspirator shown hanging by one foot. The political message would surely have been obvious to any citizen passing in the street. Because of the papal court's involvement, a war broke out between Florence and Rome. Peace negotiations were not concluded until 1480, and only after the Medici agreed to have Botticelli's portrait of the hanging archbishop of Pisa removed. After the expulsion of the Medici from Florence in 1494, the other portraits were also removed.

Giuliano's death and Lorenzo's survival are commemorated in a medal commissioned by the latter (figs. 12.4–12.5). On the side honoring Giuliano, the attack is shown in front of the polygonal enclosure that surrounded the Duomo's altar, emphasizing the sacrilegious nature and timing of the murder. Giuliano's gigantic head soars over the scene; he is identified by name, and the phrase "LUCTUS PUBLICUS" ("Public Mourning") below his profile identifies the appropriate public response to his murder. The phrase "SALUS PUBLICA" ("Public Safety") appears below Lorenzo's head, implying that Lorenzo's salvation was crucial for the good of the city.

Another commemoration of the event was a life-sized figure of Lorenzo with cloth garments and a wax head and hands. Commissioned by the Baroncelli family, it was set up in front of a miracle-working crucifix in their family church. Since a family member had been part of the conspiracy, the figure of Lorenzo was probably made to reassure the surviving Medici of the allegiance of the rest of the family. The figure wore the bloodstained garments Lorenzo had been wearing that Sunday, which he donated for this commemoration. Many figures of this type were documented, but none survives. They represent one of many genres of Renaissance art for which we have no visual record. Such gaps remind us how limited our knowledge is of certain aspects of the visual culture of this period.

12.4, 12.5. BERTOLDO DI GIOVANNI, cast by ANDREA GUACIALOTI. *Commemorative Medal of the Pazzi Conspiracy with the Portraits of Lorenzo il Magnifico* (obverse, left) *and Giuliano de' Medici* (reverse, right; shown actual size). 1478. Bronze, diameter 2½" (6.4 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Anne D. Thomson, 1923. Commissioned by Lorenzo de' Medici. Bertoldo di Giovanni, a pupil of Donatello, was a member of Lorenzo's intimate circle. The many surviving copies of this medal indicate that it was widely circulated.

Despite attempts to suppress it, the anti-Medicean party continued to grow during the last years of what should perhaps be known as Lorenzo's reign. The flames of their anger and discontent were fanned by the sermons of Girolamo Savonarola, a Ferrarese monk who succeeded St. Antoninus and Fra Angelico as prior of the monastery of San Marco. After Lorenzo's death in 1492, his son Piero, nicknamed "the Unlucky," failed to maintain the family's control of the city. In 1494 Piero and his brothers—Cardinal Giovanni, later Pope Leo X, and Giuliano, later duke of Nemours—were forced to flee Florence. Some works of art from the Medici Palace were moved to the Palazzo dei Priori, and the rest of the contents were sold at auction. It is small wonder that the humanistic precepts so important earlier—intellectualism, order, harmony—had lost their relevance.

## Donatello after 1453

The date, original location, and patronage of Donatello's harrowing figure of *The Penitent Magdalen* (fig. 12.6) are all unknown. What is not in question is its strong expressive power.

Represented as emaciated from thirty years of penitence in the wilderness and clothed only in her own long hair,

this skeletal, even spectral, creation at first seems to be the antithesis of the Early Renaissance figures discussed previously. But this is no return to the Middle Ages, and the new developments seen in the first Renaissance sculptures are also important for this figure. She stands, for example, in a beautiful and subtle *contrapposto*. This pose, in combination with the refined bone structure of her facial features and the elegance of her long fingers and delicately formed ankles and feet, subtly reminds us that the Magdalen was traditionally known for her great beauty. It is clear that Donatello was here interested in developing character, just as he had been earlier in the *Sts. Mark* and *George* and the *Zuccone* (see figs. 7.12–7.13, 7.17). Of utmost importance in this case is the Magdalen's spiritual presence: her eyes are focused on an inner vision, and her mouth seems to be murmuring a prayer as she raises her hands and asks for forgiveness.

A flood of the Arno in 1966 immersed the lower part of the statue in water, mud, and oil, necessitating a cleaning of the surface. A coat of brown paint, apparently added in the seventeenth century, was removed, disclosing that Donatello had originally painted the flesh to suggest the leathery tan produced by years of exposure to the sun, and had added streaks of gilded highlights to enhance the Magdalen's traditionally red hair. Wooden figures were some-

**12.6. DONATELLO.** *The Penitent Magdalen.* 1430s–50s(?). Poplar wood with polychromy and gold, height 6'2" (1.88 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence.

times carried through the streets in processions, and the shimmering streaks of gold on her hair would have been dazzling when hit by the sun in the open air. Like the late works of Castagno (see fig. 11.16), those of Donatello admit us to an inner world of emotional stress, and to a merciless examination of the ravages of time and decay on the human body.

Donatello's bronze group representing Judith cutting off the head of the enemy general Holofernes (fig. 12.7) was probably commissioned for the garden of the Medici Palace, where it is first documented. After the expulsion of the Medici in 1494, it was placed in front of the Palazzo dei Priori to symbolize revolt against tyranny, but when it belonged to the Medici, the group had another meaning, indicated by an inscription that described how the head of Pride was cut off by the hand of Humility. Judith's victory over Holofernes is told in the Book of Judith in the Old Testament Apocrypha, and her purity in the face of Holofernes's flattery as he tried to seduce her was compared to the virginity of Mary. In a simile borrowed from the Song of Songs, Judith, like Mary, is described as a camp of armed steel, an army terrible with banners.

Donatello's *Judith* stands transfixed at the moment of victory. The text tells us that, with God's assistance, this modest and devout woman beheaded Holofernes with two blows. In Donatello's representation she has struck Holofernes once and cut deeply into his neck; the sword is raised for the second blow. Her left foot is planted on Holofernes's right wrist, the right on his left thigh and, perhaps, his genitals. Judith's halting movement is intensified by the convulsed masses of cloth that cover her figure. In making the mold, Donatello apparently applied cloth soaked in a thin paste of clay to the clay figure, modeling it in place. Before the figure was cast in bronze some of the clay broke off, revealing the underlying cloth; Donatello chose not to repair the break.

A set of reliefs by Donatello, finished in part by his students and now on two pulpits in San Lorenzo, are as startling as the *Magdalen* and *Judith*. The reliefs were not installed on the pulpits during Donatello's lifetime, and their original purpose is uncertain. It has been proposed that they were originally intended for three separate monuments: a pulpit, an altar table, and a tomb for Cosimo de' Medici. Their themes focus on the Passion of Christ and the martyrdom of St. Lawrence, patron saint of both the Medici and the church of San Lorenzo.

The style of the reliefs is characterized by freedom, sketchiness, and even, at times, brutality. They are extraordinary, even for Donatello, and it could be argued that some of the expressive devices found here do not recur until the early twentieth century. The scenes on one of the pulpits are flanked by fluted Renaissance pilasters, but
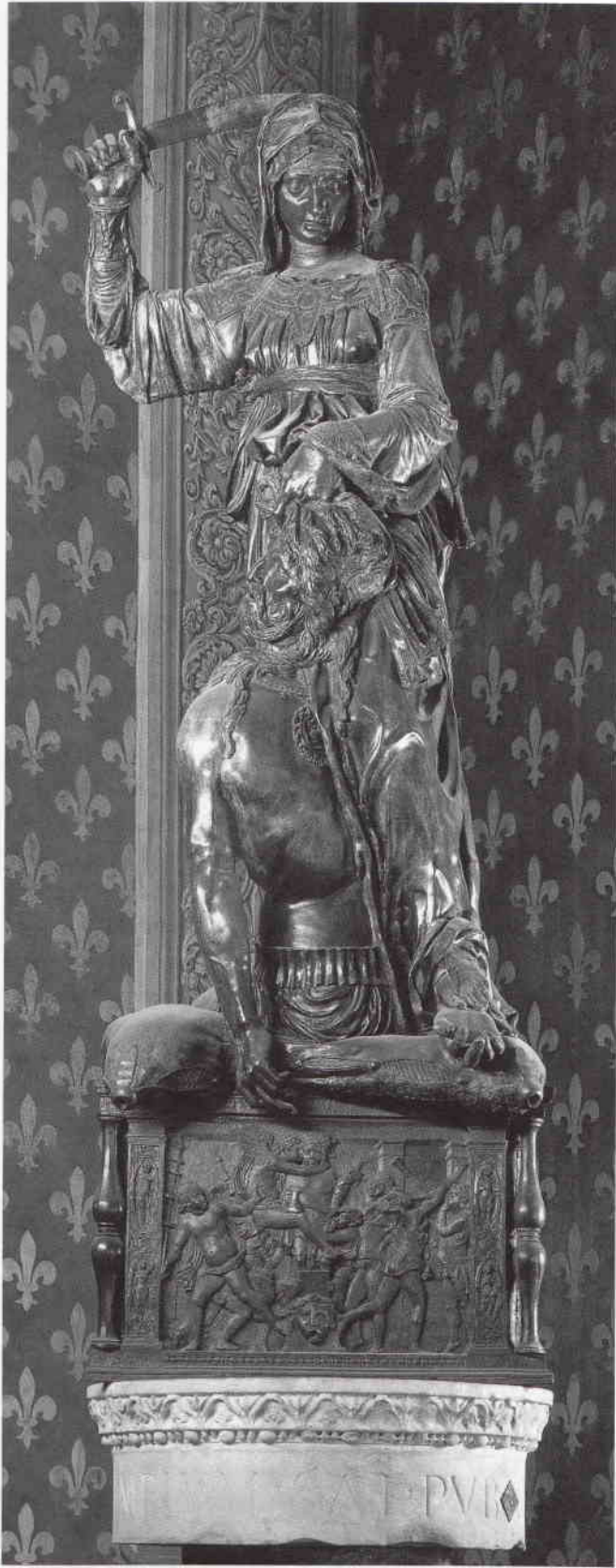
12.7. DONATELLO. *Judith and Holofernes.* c. 1446–60. Bronze, height 7'9" (2.36 m, including base). Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Perhaps commissioned by a member of the Medici family for the garden of the Medici Palace. For a diagram of the casting of the upper portion of Judith, see fig. 1.19.

figures overlap these frames, as if moving out into the space of the spectator. The *Lamentation* (fig. 12.8) takes place below the three crosses, which are placed diagonally to the picture plane and cut off by the upper frame. The thieves still hang on their crosses, but of the penitent thief we see only the knees, calves, and feet. A ladder leaning against the central cross recedes diagonally in the opposite direction. Christ, at the foot of the ladder, lies across the knees of his mother. She holds his head, assisted by a figure whose head is concealed behind that of Christ in a manner unexpected at this time. Mary's face is recessed under her veil in such a way that the light coming through the high windows of the church shadows her expression; Donatello thus guarantees the grieving mother the dignity of privacy at this poignant moment. The *Lamentation* poses insoluble mysteries: four screaming, maenad-like women rush about, but which one is the Magdalen? Who is the semi-nude figure reclining in anguish at the lower right corner? Why are the soldiers on horseback nude? Such iconographic uncertainties, uncommon in Renaissance art, add to the fascination of the relief.

The panels on the second pulpit are framed in an unprecedented illusionistic configuration: low brick walls roofed with tiles project outward, seeming to push the figures forward into the space of the church. Donatello's unorthodox manner of interpreting and representing narrative is expressed in three scenes from Christ's Passion: the Harrowing of Hell, the Resurrection, and the Ascension (fig. 12.9). They were perhaps originally intended for a tomb, for which the iconography would be appropriate. In the scene where Christ breaks down the gates of hell to save those holy figures, such as Moses, who had died before him, the clamoring crowd almost overwhelms him. Note the hideous devil to the left and the skeletal figure of St. John the Baptist to the right. The *Resurrection* is the most surprising, for this is not a heroic interpretation of this triumphant scene: Christ is exhausted and seems barely able to pull himself upward. In traditional representations (see fig. 11.19) Christ is centralized; here he is placed to the far left, as if to suggest that his resurrection is slow and difficult. In the subsequent *Ascension*, however, victory is his, for he rises dramatically upward past the frame of the scene, leaving the apostles and Virgin Mary kneeling below. The progression of the figure of Christ in these three scenes—from submersion in the crowd to stepping upward out of the tomb to the final levitation—is almost cinematic.

In his last works, the aged sculptor—one of the founders of the Renaissance and a prime mover of every change in its evolution—abandoned the Renaissance notion of the ideal in order to emphasize drama and emotion and to involve the observer more fully in the experiences he was

12.8. DONATELLO. *Lamentation*. 1460s; completed by students of Donatello at a later date. Bronze, height approx. 40" (1 m). 🏛 S. Lorenzo, Florence. Commissioned by a member of the Medici family.

In 1547 the Renaissance sculptor Baccio Bandinelli explained that the rough finish of these works was the result of the aging Donatello's failing eyesight: "When he did the pulpits and doors of bronze in San Lorenzo for Cosimo il Vecchio, Donatello was so old that his eyesight no longer permitted him to judge them properly and to give them a beautiful finish; although their conception is good, Donatello never did coarser work." Portraits of Cosimo de' Medici and his wife Contessina have been identified in the two figures at the foot of the left-hand cross.



12.9. DONATELLO. The *Harrowing of Hell*, the *Resurrection*, and the *Ascension*. 1460s. Bronze, height approx. 26" (66 cm). 🏛 S. Lorenzo, Florence. Commissioned by a member of the Medici family.

representing. In the 1450s, both Donatello and Castagno possessed an insight into suffering that enabled them to explore the darker regions of human experience.

## Desiderio da Settignano

Desiderio da Settignano (c. 1429/32–1464) chose a different direction and style. The son of a stone carver, he was born and trained in Settignano, a village of stonecutters. Few sculptors have understood the possibilities of marble with such intimacy as Desiderio.

At Santa Croce Desiderio designed the tomb of the Florentine humanist chancellor Carlo Marsuppini (fig. 12.10) as a pendant to Lionardo Bruni's tomb by Bernardo Rossellino (see fig. 10.27), which lies directly opposite. The general layout of the monuments is similar and may even have been required by the commission, but the Marsuppini tomb produces an impression of greater lightness and grace. The sarcophagus and bier are lower, the moldings narrower, and Desiderio has divided the paneling into four narrow slabs that accent verticality. He crowns his design with a tall lampstand and elegant moldings imitated from Roman art—elements in keeping with the classical style of the epitaph carved onto the elegant sarcophagus: "Stay and see the marbles that enshrine a great sage, one for whose mind there was not world enough. Carlo, the great glory of his age, knew all that nature, the heavens and human conduct have to tell. O Roman and Greek muses, now unloose your hair. Alas, the fame and splendor of your choir is dead." At the base of the pilasters, *putti* hold shields displaying the Marsuppini arms (fig. 12.11). Rather than being rectangular, the sarcophagus has the curving forms of an ancient Roman funerary urn. An antique vine-scroll ornament animates its surfaces, and the open-work scrolls at the upper corners and winged shell at the base demonstrate Desiderio's remarkable skill in carving.

Desiderio's *rilievo schiacciato* of the *Meeting of Christ and John the Baptist as Youths* (fig. 12.12) can be related to a passage written by Giovanni Dominici in 1403 in his *On the Education of Children*:

Have pictures of saintly children or young virgins in the home, in which your child, still in swaddling clothes, may take delight and thereby may be gladdened by acts and signs pleasing to childhood. And what I say of pictures applies also to statues. It is well to have the Virgin Mary with the Child in her arms, with a little bird or apple in His hand. There should be a good representation of Jesus suckling, sleeping in His Mother's lap or standing courteously before Her while they look at each other. So let the child see himself mirrored in the Holy Baptist clothed in camel's skin, a little child who enters the desert, plays with the birds, sucks the honeyed flowers and sleeps on the ground. It will not be amiss if he should see Jesus and the Baptist, Jesus and the boy Evangelist pictured together; [or] the slaughtered Innocents, so that he may learn the fear of weapons and of armed men.



12.10. **DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO.** Tomb of Carlo Marsuppini. c. 1459. White and colored marbles, originally with gilding and green and red paint and fresco surround; 20' × 11'9" (6.1 × 3.6 m). ⛪ Sta. Croce, Florence. While the patron would probably have been the Florentine state because of Marsuppini's service as the city's chancellor, evidence shows that the tomb was in part funded by the Martelli and Medici families.

12.11. Putto, detail of fig. 12.10.

Marsuppini tomb, these effects are exploited by broad surfaces, subtle cutting, and a delicate polish, while in the *tondo* with the two boys, the slightest variation in surface level is used to define the forms and to suggest their flowing locks and spontaneous expressions. Desiderio's works embody the ideals of elegance and refinement characteristic of the Florentine aristocracy at mid-century.



*Above:* 12.12. DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO. *Meeting of Christ and John the Baptist as Youths (Arconati-Visconti Tondo).* c. 1453–64. Marble relief, diameter 20" (50 cm). The Louvre, Paris. In the sixteenth century, Vasari described a *tondo* of this subject, perhaps this one, as in the collection of Cosimo I de' Medici, but no such work is listed in the 1492 inventory of the Medici Palace.

This passage demonstrates that images in the home were intended to teach even very young children not only the identity of figures in religious art but also an understanding of Christian beliefs and moral behavior. In Desiderio's relief, the boy Christ is distinguished by the cross in his halo, the youthful Baptist by the animal skin. Desiderio captures the vivacity of their interaction, and the happy expressions reveal a delight in their relationship that would indeed provide an appropriate model for children.

Desiderio seems to have set out to achieve in marble the effects of light created in paint by Fra Angelico and Domenico Veneziano, and in gilded bronze by Ghiberti. He knew that the brilliant whiteness of marble meant that any shadow would be partly dissolved by the light from the crystals and partly radiated by reflections from surrounding illuminated surfaces. In the figures on the

## The Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal

Antonio Rossellino (1427–1479) was the youngest of five artist brothers, and his nickname (Rossellino means "Little Redhead") became the name by which the whole family was known. He was the pupil of his older brother Bernardo (see figs. 10.5, 10.27). Antonio and his workshop played an important role in the creation of the burial chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal (figs. 12.13–12.14), which required the collaboration of an architect, four sculptors (Antonio Rossellino, his brothers Bernardo and Giovanni, and Luca della Robbia), three painters (Alesso Baldovinetti and Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo), their workshops, and other craftsmen as well. Despite these many hands, the chapel today—which looks exactly as it

12.13. ANTONIO MANETTI (architect); ANTONIO, BERNARDO, and GIOVANNI ROSSELLINO (sculptors); ANTONIO and PIERO DEL POLLAIUOLO and ALESSO BALDOVINETTI (painters). Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal. 1460–73. S. Miniato, Florence (see also figs. 12.14, 12.27).
🏛 Commissioned by the executors of the will of the Cardinal of Portugal. The altarpiece shown here is a copy of the original, by Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo, now in the Uffizi Gallery.

must have in the 1470s—is a stylistically unified totality rather than a demonstration of the diverse talents of a number of individuals.

James, a prince of the Portuguese royal family who was made a cardinal at twenty-two, died of tuberculosis in Florence when he was only twenty-five. He had expressed a desire to be buried at San Miniato, and immense sums poured in for his funerary chapel. After all, one of his cousins was king of Portugal, another was the Holy Roman Empress, and his aunt was the duchess of Burgundy, the richest state in Europe. The chapel was designed by Antonio Manetti, a pupil of Brunelleschi, and the architectural detail was carved by Giovanni Rossellino, third of the five Rossellino brothers. Work started in 1460 and was carried out rapidly, as is shown in documents that log the work on the chapel almost from day to day.

The ground plan is a perfect square, with arches on the three inner walls that match the open arch of the entrance. Coffers with decoration highlighted in gold fill each arch.

Classicizing pilasters define the corners and frame each wall. The chapel's unity is clearly the result of thoughtful planning. On the back and left walls, for example, there is a round window; on the tomb wall this is matched by the appearance of a Madonna and Child in a windowlike form of the same dimensions. The pattern of the metal gate that closes off the chapel resembles twisted rope; the same design decorates the painted railing behind the figures in the altarpiece. The landscape in the altarpiece looks like the view we would see over the Arno Valley if the altar wall were to be dissolved, while the cypress trees above the *Annunciation* on the left wall (see fig. 12.27) copy those in the cemetery just outside this chapel. The inlaid marble floor copies the Romanesque style of circles and geometric patterning (known as Cosmati work) in the pavements of the adjacent church; this pattern of circles is in turn echoed in Luca della Robbia's enameled terra-cotta dome, which has five medallions representing the Cardinal Virtues and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. On the altar wall, Antonio

12.14. ANTONIO ROSSELLINO. Tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal. 1460–66. White and colored marbles with traces of polychromy and gold, width of chapel wall 15'9" (4.8 m). 🏛 Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal, S. Miniato, Florence. Commissioned by the executors of the will of the Cardinal of Portugal. Originally certain details were colored and/or gilded.

Pollaiuolo's frescoed angels pull back curtains similar to those that surround the Cardinal's tomb on the right wall.

Documents reveal that in executing the tomb Antonio Rossellino was helped by several assistants and his brother Bernardo, but there is little doubt that he was the designer and leading master. As compared with earlier, static tombs, Antonio's is dynamic. The traditional curtains seem to have been momentarily drawn aside to reveal the monument. The cardinal lies on a bier above a coffin that Antonio imitated—at the cardinal's request—from an ancient Roman porphyry sarcophagus at that time in the portico of the Pantheon. The two angels to the sides seem to have just alighted; one bears the Crown of Eternal Life, the other once held the Palm of Victory. The red marble background was once covered with gilded designs to resemble a brocaded cloth-of-honor, and an ornamental structure in the center of the wall is made of rare stones. Against this background two more angels seem to fly in, holding a circular marble wreath. Here, against a ground of blue with gold stars, the Virgin and Child bless the cardinal. This heavenly vision seems to be resting briefly, poised against the architecture by the angels, as if in a moment they might move on.

The angel with the crown can be attributed to the more conservative Bernardo, while the one who once held the palm shows the greater dynamism of Antonio's style. Antonio was aware, like Desiderio, of the luminous possibilities of marble, but he found other means of exploiting it. In the *Madonna and Child*, placed so that the light in the chapel never leaves their features, we see how Antonio brings unity through light that flows over the surfaces of flesh and drapery.

The handsome young cardinal seems to be dreaming of the paradise to which the sacred figures promise him entrance, although one could almost say that it lies around us as we stand in this most perfect of Quattrocento chapels. Documents suggest that Desiderio supplied a death mask of the cardinal, from which Antonio created the convincing portrait. The base of the tomb features youthful genii, cornucopias, unicorns holding garlands, and a skull that seems to be smiling.

## Benedetto and Giuliano da Maiano

Of the host of marble sculptors at work in the later Quattrocento, one of the most vigorous was Benedetto da Maiano (c. 1442–1497), who, like the Rossellino brothers, came from a family of stonecutters. The family is named for their hometown, Maiano, which is close to the quarries where *pietra serena* is still being extracted. Benedetto's work includes a pulpit with scenes from the life of St. Francis for Santa Croce in Florence (visible in fig. 2.36),



12.15. BENEDETTO DA MAIANO. *Bust of Pietro Mellini*. 1474. Marble, height 21" (53.3 cm). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Probably commissioned by the sitter.

the tomb of Filippo Strozzi (visible in fig. 13.33), a decorated marble doorway in the Palazzo dei Priori, and a number of portrait busts. Benedetto's *Bust of Pietro Mellini* (fig. 12.15) presents a topographic survey of the wrinkled features of the elderly subject. There is an honesty here that is related to republican and early imperial Roman portraiture.

Benedetto and his brother Giuliano were architects as well as sculptors. Giuliano (1432–1490) is best known as a woodworker and executor of architectural ornament; it is in this capacity that he worked on an important project for the Florentine Duomo: the inlaid wood (*intarsia*) decoration of the North Sacristy (fig. 12.16). Giuliano's contribution included scenes of the local bishop-saint Zenobius flanked by two saints, and the *Annunciation*, flanked by the prophets Amos and Isaiah. The frieze around the top includes carved *putti* holding garlands, a motif derived from ancient Roman sculpture that became an important decorative element in Renaissance art.

**12.16. ANTONIO MANETTI, GIULIANO DA MAIANO, and others.** *Intarsia* decoration of the North Sacristy of Florence Cathedral. 1436–45, 1463–65. Inlaid and carved wood. 🏛 Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo.

The decoration of the sacristy includes documented work by Agnolo di Lazzaro, Bernardo di Tommaso di Ghigo, Francesco di Giovanni di Guccio, and Lo Scheggia on the south wall, in addition to that by Manetti (the north wall) and Giuliano da Maiano (the end wall). The figure of Amos is perhaps based on a cartoon by Antonio del Pollaiuolo. The frieze with carved putti is by several artists including, possibly, Giuliano's brother Benedetto.

The skill needed to execute such a project is evident, especially given the fact that *intarsia* workers prided themselves on using only natural-colored wood rather than resorting to dyed or bleached wood. Working from a cartoon prepared by the artist, woodworkers cut pieces of thin wood veneer and inlaid them into a solid ground. *Intarsia* was practiced in Italy beginning in the fourteenth century, with the Florentine Sacristy and the Studiolo at Urbino (see figs. 14.31–14.32), probably also designed by Giuliano, providing the best surviving examples. Both rooms demonstrate the woodworkers' interest in creating complex *trompe l'oeil* effects in this difficult medium.

In its gigantic scale and massive bulk, the Palazzo Strozzi (fig. 12.17) dwarfs every other residence in Florence. The design is attributed to Benedetto da Maiano, but the extant wooden model on display at the Palazzo Strozzi was made by Giuliano da Sangallo (see pp. 309–12), and the colossal cornice was added by Simone del Pollaiuolo, called Il Cronaca, who succeeded Benedetto as architect.

Sources tell us that the Florentine banker Filippo Strozzi wanted to build a palace that would outshine any other in Florence. Mindful of the fate of his exiled ancestor Palla, however, Filippo showed designs for a more modest structure to Lorenzo de' Medici. Lorenzo thought them insignificant and urged Filippo to build something more imposing,

12.17. BENEDETTO DA MAIANO. Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. 1489–1507. Commissioned by Filippo Strozzi.

When he returned from exile in 1466, Filippo Strozzi wrote: "I am constantly thinking and planning, and if God should grant me a prosperous life I hope to achieve something memorable." After the palazzo was begun he wrote in his *Memoirs* that it was "for the benefit of myself and that of all my descendants." The idealism of the Renaissance is evident in his hope that the family palazzo would serve "as an abode for great, noble men of good will."

When Filippo Strozzi died in 1494, the lowest story of the palace had been completed only to the height of the iron rings used for tying the reins of horses. The surviving wooden model of the Palazzo Strozzi should perhaps be related to Alberti's advice: "I always recommend the ancient builders' practice by which not only drawings and pictures but also wooden models are made, so that the projected work can be considered and reconsidered, with the counsel of experts, in its whole and all its parts." Unfortunately, Il Cronaca's cornice stops halfway along the Via Strozzi façade, and it is uncertain if it conforms to Benedetto's original design.

as befitted the magnificence of the Strozzi family and Lorenzo's Florence. This gave Filippo the opportunity to do what he had intended all along. The finished building differs from Florentine palaces of the Medici type, as well as from Giuliano da Sangallo's model, because it is unified by rustication that at first seems uniform; only close study reveals that the projection of the stones is slightly graduated from one story to the next. Benedetto thus harmonized the parts in a manner that fulfills Albertian ideals.

The oblong courtyard (fig. 12.18) is, in the opinion of some scholars, Florence's finest Quattrocento courtyard. Compared to the Medici Palace courtyard (see fig. 6.26), the Strozzi example is larger and deeper, allowed Benedetto to use higher columns and arches. There are further refinements. Arched openings in the central story, some filled with cruciform windows and some originally left open, echo the open arches below. The third story is a loggia of delicate Corinthian columns united by a balustrade. Thus the courtyard both opens outward through the surrounding apertures and seems to open upward through the use of superimposed verticals. The increase in scale and unity typifies later Quattrocento Florentine architecture.

## Giuliano da Sangallo

Giuliano da Sangallo (1443?–1516) was the first eminent member of a dynasty of architects that included Giuliano's brother Antonio the Elder (see figs. 18.1, 18.54–18.56) and their nephew Antonio the Younger (see figs. 18.57–18.59). Giuliano, perhaps the most imaginative Florentine architect of the later Quattrocento, was imbued with the refined classicism of the age, and his buildings provide a setting for the cultivated life we know from the writings of contemporary historians and philosophers. His knowledge of Roman antiquity was derived from study of the original monuments, and his drawings often document buildings that no longer exist or have been modified over the years (fig. 12.19). Despite this interest in antiquity, Giuliano never forgot his Brunelleschian heritage. Although he was probably only a year older than Donato Bramante, founder of High Renaissance architecture, Giuliano did not produce any work in that new, grand style.

Giuliano's Florentine buildings of the 1480s include a villa at Poggio a Caiano (fig. 12.20), built for Lorenzo de' Medici on a small hill (*poggio* is the Italian word for hill)



12.18. BENEDETTO DA MAIANO. Courtyard, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence.
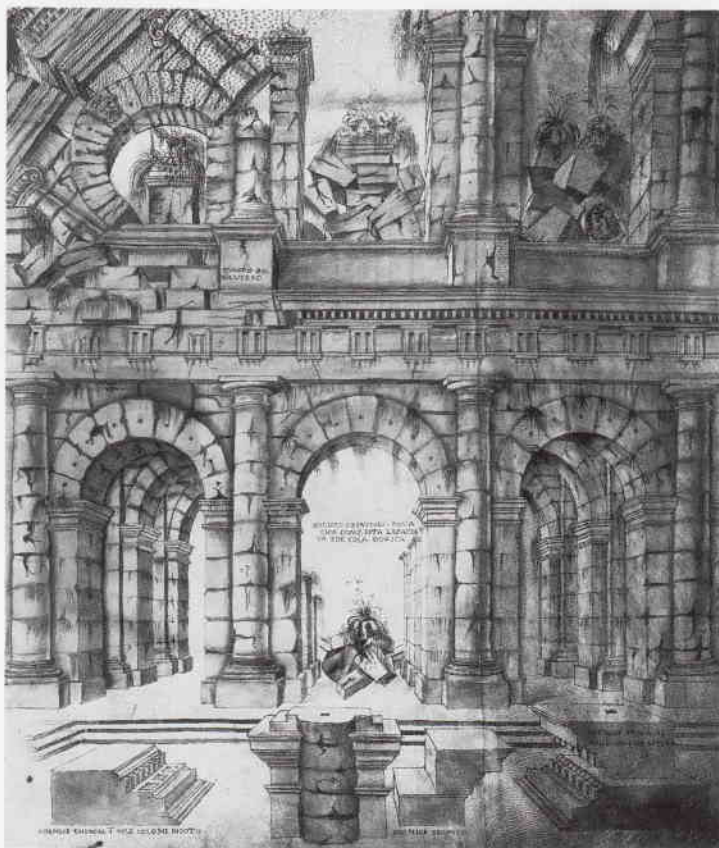


12.19. GIULIANO DA SANGALLO. *Ruins of the Ancient Roman Theater of Marcellus, Rome*. 1480s. Drawing, 18¼ × 15½" (46 × 37.82 cm). Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican, Rome.

12.20. GIULIANO DA SANGALLO. Villa Medici, Poggio a Caiano. 1480s. Commissioned by Lorenzo de' Medici. The double staircase and crowning clock were added in the eighteenth century.

near the plain of Prato. The site was chosen to command views of the plain and of the mountains to the north and south. The simple block of Giuliano's structure, with its plain walls and sharply projecting eaves, is interrupted by a temple portico, apparently the first in a long line of such porticoes for Renaissance and Baroque villas. The widely spaced columns and low, broad proportions are unexpected, but they may have been based on Etruscan models; such an archaeological reference would have been appreciated in the Tuscany of the Medici.

Within the pediment are the Medici arms, the surrounding space filled by flowing ribbons in an antique style. The



12.21. GIULIANO DA SANGALLO. Sta. Maria delle Carceri, Prato. 1485–92. Commissioned by the Opera of Sta. Maria delle Carceri.

The impetus to build the church was to house a miracle-working image, as is revealed in the diary of Luca Landucci: "At Prato in July of 1484, the populace began to worship an image of the Virgin Mary, which was carried throughout the city. The image performed many miracles … causing the townspeople to initiate the construction [of a church] at great expense."
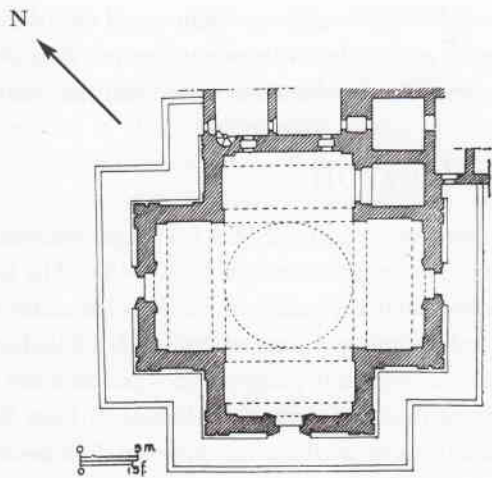
12.22. Plan of fig. 12.21.

columns are Ionic, but a broad, fluted necking band increases the importance of the capitals in an effort to provide visual support for the rather heavy pediment. Behind the pediment, a barrel vault covers a loggia where the Medici and their guests could sit in the shade. A similar barrel vault, much larger, roofs the central hall of the villa, which was later decorated with a fresco by Jacopo Pontormo (see fig. 18.23). The cream color of the walls and the gray of the *pietra serena* are enhanced by an enameled terra-cotta frieze of white figures against a blue ground that represents legends of the ancient gods. Neither the sculptor of the frieze nor all the subjects have been identified.

Giuliano's other principal extant structure is the church of Santa Maria delle Carceri at Prato (fig. 12.21–12.23).



12.23. Interior of fig. 12.21.

Like so many other churches of the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento, it was built to enshrine a miraculous image. The Greek cross plan was perhaps influenced by that of Alberti's San Sebastiano in Mantua. It is surmounted by a dome with twelve ribs, twelve oculi, and a lantern, closely following Brunelleschi's domes for the sacristy of San Lorenzo and the Pazzi Chapel (see figs. 6.15, 6.1). Giuliano's forms, however, are more richly modeled, in accordance with the taste of the time, and on the interior he inserted a walkway and balustrade at the base of the dome. The blue-and-white terra-cotta frieze is rich with lampstands, garlands, and ribbons, and each of the figured capitals is different. The exterior, still unfinished, has marble incrustation in the Albertian tradition, as seen in Luciano Laurana's ideal cityscape (see fig. 14.30). The spe-cific details—a Doric lower story surmounted by an Ionic story two-thirds its height, with enframing pilasters clustered at the corners—also demonstrate the theorist's ideals.

## Benozzo Gozzoli

The painter who seems to typify the luxurious tendencies of the 1450s is Benozzo Gozzoli (c. 1421–1497). His long artistic career began in the studio of Fra Angelico. Later he worked in Umbria and in Rome where, with a collaborator, he was commissioned to paint mantles and banners for the crowning of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini as Pope Pius II; unfortunately none of these examples of Renaissance ephemera survives. He returned to Florence to paint the frescoes in the chapel in the Palazzo Medici (figs. 12.1,



12.24. BENOZZO GOZZOLI. *Procession of the Magi.* c. 1459. Fresco. Medici Chapel, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence. Probably commissioned by Piero de' Medici (see also fig. 12.1).

12.24; for the palace see figs. 6.22–6.26). The Medici belonged to the Company of the Magi, a religious organization that flourished in Renaissance Florence. Their participation in this confraternity almost certainly explains the choice of the Journey of the Magi as the subject for their chapel decorations. Certainly, Benozzo's frescoes have nothing to do with the rather penitential mood of *The Adoration of the Infant Jesus* painted by Fra Filippo Lippi as the chapel's altarpiece only a few years earlier (see fig. 9.15).

The landscape background that plays such an important role in Benozzo's decoration is derived from the surroundings of Florence and includes castles and villas owned by the Medici, while the retinue includes contemporary figures, several of whom seem to be trying to catch the eye of the spectator. The man on the white horse leading the cavalcade at the left has been identified as Piero the Gouty, while behind him is Cosimo riding on a donkey. Portraits of Piero's children Giuliano and Lorenzo appear in the group to the left, below Benozzo's self-portrait, which is identified by the Latin signature "OPUS BENOTII" ("The work of Benozzo") on his hat. The clothing and horse trappings, studded with gold and blazing with red, blue, and yellow against the green of the foliage, are enhanced by the red Florentine robes.

The composition is unified by the landscape, with its vertical trees and curving roads, and the walls of the chapel seem to have been painted away by Benozzo's continuous panorama. The result is similar to the tapestry-like effect noted in the Gothic frescoes in Trent (see fig. 5.24), suggesting that Gozzoli's patron may have wanted the paintings to emulate that much more expensive medium. Cosimo de' Medici would have been as aware of the prestige of Northern tapestries as was the patron of the earlier frescoes. Benozzo, however, combines the decorative patterning of tapestries with a deep and broad Florentine landscape, strongly modeled figures, animals seen in convincing recession, careful observation of detail, and incisive portraits of the prominent Florentines who were his patrons and his patrons' friends.

## Baldovinetti and Pesellino

Among the artists of the Florentine Renaissance, Alesso Baldovinetti (1425–1499) was the only one brought up in patrician surroundings. The Baldovinetti were among the oldest families in Florence, and their house-tower is still visible from the Ponte Vecchio. Alesso was apprenticed to Domenico Veneziano at Sant'Egidio, but he soon came under the influence of Andrea del Castagno. In his journal he records having painted—more or less from Castagno's dictation when the latter was ill—a hell scene "with many infernal furies." But the gentleness of Alesso's art had little in common with that of Castagno, and his work is suffused with the soft light that he knew from the works of Domenico. While Baldovinetti's art can be whimsical, witty, charming, and refined, he must be appreciated as a conservative artist rather than an innovator.

Baldovinetti's profile portrait of an unknown Florentine woman (fig. 12.25) expresses patrician Quattrocento elegance. She is posed in the conventional profile view that is used almost without exception for female portraits until the end of the century, long after male sitters are shown turned toward the observer (see fig. 13.26). Such a pose, precluding eye contact, is surely related to social practices; Alberti's advice to women in his book on the family cautions humility lest one risk divine wrath: "A beautiful face is praised, but unchaste eyes make it ugly through men's scorn. … A handsome person is pleasing to see, but a shameless gesture or an act of incontinence in an instant renders her appearance vile. Unchastity angers God, and you know that God punishes nothing so severely in women as he does this lack."

The three palm leaves that decorate the sitter's sleeve are probably a reference either to her paternal family or, were she married or about to be married, to that of her husband. The representation seems to be less a portrait of a specific woman and more an emblem of male property. The fact that she remains anonymous may underscore the limited status of women during this period. As this picture attests,



12.25. ALESSO BALDOVINETTI. *Portrait of a Young Woman.* c. 1465. Panel, 25 × 16" (62.9 × 40.6 cm). National Gallery, London.

12.26. ALESSO BALDOVINETTI. *Nativity*. 1460–62. Fresco, 13'4" × 14' (4 × 4.3 m). Atrium, SS. Annunziata, Florence. Commissioned by Arrigo Arrigucci, whose portrait may appear in one of the medallions in the frame.

the opportunities for expression, self-discovery, and inno-vation that Renaissance humanism opened to men were not equally available to women.

Alesso's interest in local landscape is evident in the Arno Valley view that he chose as the background for his fresco of the *Nativity* at Santissima Annunziata (fig. 12.26), which occupied him off and on between 1460 and 1462. This length of time should indicate that Alesso did not follow the traditional method used by Andrea del Castagno, for example, who could have completed a fresco this size in a month. But Castagno cared little about the

subtleties of diffused light or Alberti's total visual unity, while Baldovinetti seems to have concluded that he could obtain neither by traditional means. He therefore painted only a few portions of the picture in true fresco, and then waited until the plaster had dried so that he could paint *a secco*. Because the fresco was located in an atrium exposed to winter fogs and rain, in time the *a secco* faces, hands, and drapery peeled off, and Alesso's underdrawing is now visible. Even so, the painting is impressive in the airy open-ness of its setting and the view over the expansive Tuscan plain, which is filled with the light of a clear winter day.
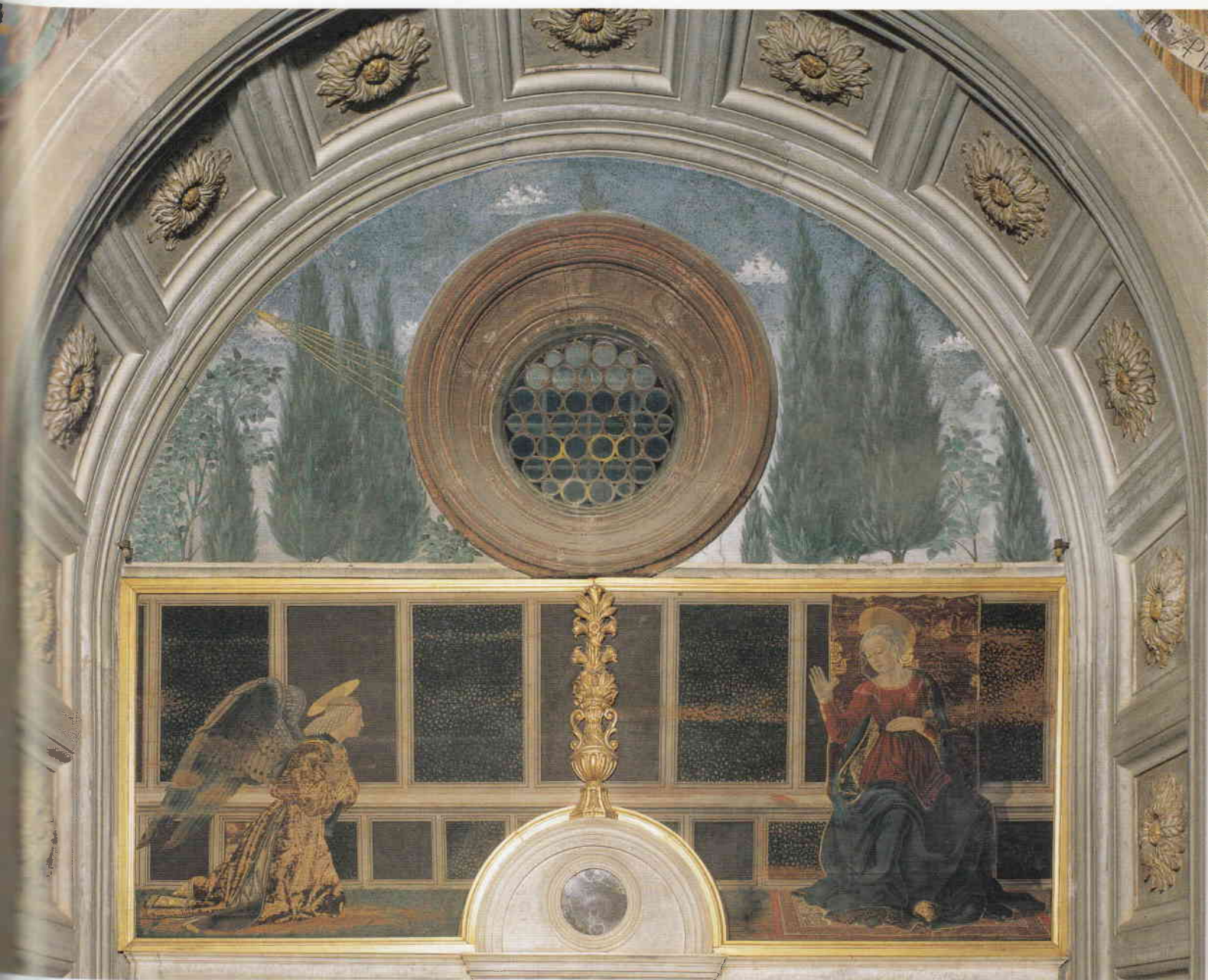
12.27. ALESSO BALDOVINETTI. *Annunciation*. 1466–67. Fresco and panel, width of chapel wall 15'9" (4.8 m). 🏛 Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal, S. Miniato, Florence. Commissioned by the executors of the will of the Cardinal of Portugal. See fig. 12.13.

Baldovinetti was the choice when, in 1466, the executors of the Cardinal of Portugal needed a painter to decorate the walls, lunettes, and spandrels of his burial chapel (see figs. 12.13–12.14). Baldovinetti's *Annunciation* (fig. 12.27) is placed over the exquisite throne that faces the cardinal's tomb; because of the cardinal's death it will remain perpetually empty. Again Baldovinetti had to experiment, possibly because of pressure to finish the paintings rapidly. While the background of cypresses and cedars is painted in fresco, the wall, bench, and figures were painted on an unprimed oak panel, probably in the artist's studio in the winter months of 1466–67. Here and there the color has peeled away to show the grain.

Francesco di Stefano (c. 1422–1457), known as Francesco Pesellino, was probably a pupil of Fra Filippo Lippi. He was not an innovator, but his style represents a synthesis of the developments we have been studying, and his surviving works—despite his early death—indicate that he had many patrons. His panel of *The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death* (fig. 12.28) and its companion, *The Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Eternity*, originally decorated a pair of large chests known as *cassoni* (for a later

example, see fig. 13.17). Their themes are derived from Petrarch's poem *The Triumphs*, written c. 1360–70. The chests are probably those identified as *The Triumphs of Petrarch* and listed, without the name of the painter, in the 1492 Medici Palace inventory. They were located in the bedchamber occupied by Lorenzo il Magnifico, along with Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* panels (see figs. 11.5–11.6).

In Florence during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, such chests were commissioned to celebrate a betrothal, and they would have been carried through the streets as a demonstration of the wealth of the families. It is possible that these chests were made for the wedding of Piero de' Medici to Lucrezia Tornabuoni in 1444. As storage places for clothing, such chests were heavily used, and as a result their lavish frameworks, with classicizing pilasters and pawed feet, are usually lost. The paintings that survive the dismembering of the chests are often inappropriately framed and displayed as Renaissance works of art hanging on museum walls. Pesellino's two panels show the damage that resulted when the chests were locked or unlocked and heavy keys banged against them. The fact that they were carelessly treated in this way probably indicates that, as taste changed, the paintings were considered to be old-fashioned and unimportant in both style and iconographic message.

Petrarch's *Triumphs* were a popular subject for *cassoni* and other decorations in Quattrocento Florence, in part because they provided a decorative way of exemplifying virtuous behavior. Pesellino's panels are among the earliest known representations of the theme, and among the few that include all six triumphs. In the grouping depicted here, three carts topped by allegorical figures are pulled by various animals. Atop the cart of Love is blindfolded Cupid, who has let an arrow fly at an unsuspecting victim. On Chastity's cart Cupid is shown bound and submissive below the allegorical figure of the virtue; unicorns, symbols of virginity, pull this cart, which is surrounded by delicate maidens. The cart surmounted by the haggard figure of Death comes from the opposite direction. Pulled by two black buffaloes, it is shaped like a coffin. The victims of Death's scythe lie on the ground around the cart.

Winter is the season of Death, as is evident in the barren landscape behind this cart. Petrarch's poem presents a sequence of conquests, with Love conquered by Chastity, Chastity defeated by Death, Death by Fame, Fame by Time, and Time, in the end, conquered by Eternity. This sequence helps to explain the positions of carts in Pesellino's series, for while Love's cart moves from left to right, it is headed off by Chastity's cart, which moves forward, only to be cut off by Death's cart, moving in from the right.

Quattrocento representations of the *Triumphs* are especially valuable because they give us some idea of the appearance of the ornamented carts that were common in Florentine Renaissance civic pageants and processions. The visual, moral, and educational impact of these traveling displays on the populace of the city should not be underestimated. They were probably more noticed and discussed than many an altarpiece, masterpiece or not, tucked away in a family chapel.

Other popular subjects for *cassoni* were the Garden of Love, tales from Boccaccio, the Seven Virtues and the Seven Arts, scenes of battle or justice, and themes from Homer, Livy, and Virgil. Whatever the subject, the intent was usually didactic, and often directed specifically toward the female members of the household. The insides of the lids, which would be seen only by the members of the household and servants, were sometimes painted with a nude female figure in one and an almost nude male figure in the other; these were probably intended to represent classical figures such as Paris and Venus. Many *botteghe* of the mid-Quattrocento specialized in the production of *cassoni*, and because they were largely painted by assistants, many of the surviving examples are difficult to attribute to a particular painter or workshop. That Pesellino can be identified as the painter of this pair supports the proposal that these luxury products were made for a Medici wedding.

Pesellino's style demonstrates a mastery of the techniques that the artists of the earlier decades of the Quattrocento had developed. Later Florentine artists used the techniques and style established by their predecessors as a foundation for new developments, as we shall see.



12.28. FRANCESCO PESELLINO. *The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death*. c. 1444. *Cassone* panel, $16\frac{1}{2} \times 61\frac{1}{4}$" ($42 \times 154$ cm). Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.

Pesellino, who was in partnership for a period with two other painters, had a *bottega* on the Corso degli Adimari, a street heavily populated with painters' workshops. It was to this street that a potential patron might gravitate when looking for an artist.

IPSVM QVEM GENVIT ADORAVIT MARIA
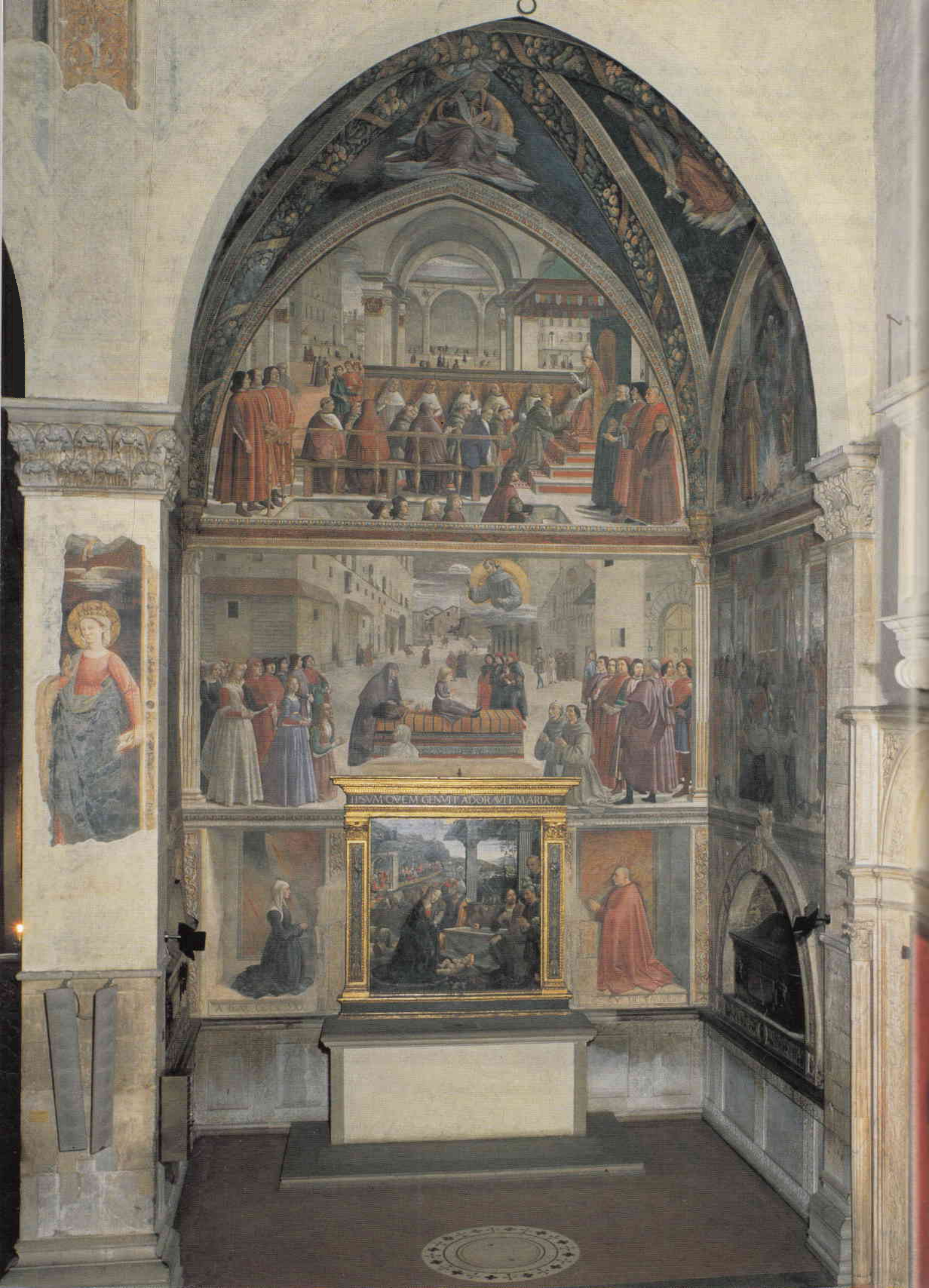
# 13
# ART IN FLORENCE UNDER
# THE MEDICI II

At the beginning of the final third of the Quattrocento, few of the innovators who had founded Florentine Renaissance art were still alive. Of those who were, Uccello was not working, and Luca della Robbia was old and his style had become repetitive. Piero della Francesca was painting in Urbino and Borgo Sansepolcro, and Alberti was designing buildings for Florence and Mantua. The new generation of artists enjoyed what appears, in view of the general economic decline, to have been extravagant patronage from the great Florentine families. In addition, Flemish oil technique made an impact with the arrival of a large northern altarpiece in the city (see fig. 13.32). The period was dominated by five artists: Antonio del Pollaiuolo, Andrea del Verrocchio, Alessandro Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, and Domenico del Ghirlandaio.

All five were well acquainted with the methods of depicting space, form, and light discovered by their predecessors. But new fields remained for exploration, and the leading artists set out to investigate them. Professor Hartt defined the three broad stylistic directions explored by these artists as "Science, Poetry, and Prose." While the actual situation is somewhat more complex, these categories provide a useful way to understand the late Quattrocento. That all three flourished reveals that Florentine patrons supported a variety of different styles.

As Hartt defined it, the first of these tendencies begins with the premise that all nature is one, that plant, animal, and human physiology are as worthy of study as the principles of form, space, and light, and that motion, growth, decay, and dissolution are more characteristic of our world than mathematical relationships or, indeed, any other apparently enduring verity. The greatest exponent of this vitalistic, animistic, scientific trend is Pollaiuolo, but similar concerns motivated Verrocchio as well, if to a less marked degree. These two artists are the only two painter-sculptors of the period; they are also the most original sculptors. Pollaiuolo seems to have appealed especially to the elite of Lorenzo de' Medici's circle.

The second current is concerned less with the outer world than with the life of the spirit. The artists of this lyrical, poetic, romantic current often emphasized the abstract values of line and preferred subjects that express emotional yearnings. The unchallenged leader in this movement is Botticelli, but Filippino Lippi at times keeps pace with him and at times goes beyond him into the realms of fantasy. This second current seems to have pleased the Medici less than it did those in their circle, especially the Neoplatonic philosophers.

The third trend emphasizes the here and now. The master here was Ghirlandaio. The foregrounds of his religious narratives are filled with contemporary Florentines, while the backgrounds show how Florence looked or how he thought it should look. Prose, not poetry, was the aim; his representations are descriptive, well-balanced, measured, composed, and intelligible. This third style seems to have appealed especially to the well-to-do citizen without intellectual pretenses—the successful merchant or banker.

*Opposite:* 13.1. DOMENICO DEL GHIRLANDAIO. Fresco cycle of the legend of St. Francis. 1483–86. Size of chapel: 12'2" deep × 17'2" wide (3.7 × 5.25 m). Sassetti Chapel, Sta. Trinita, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco Sassetti. The unusual choice of sibyls for the chapel's ceiling is probably in honor of Francesco's daughter, who was named Sibilla. The basalt tombs at the sides are attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo. The altarpiece, also by Ghirlandaio, is the *Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds* (see fig. 13.37). See also fig. 13.36.

# Antonio del Pollaiuolo

Antonio del Pollaiuolo (1431/32–1498) excels in subjects of action, especially themes from mythology in which his naturalism can be expressed. His treatments of scriptural themes sometimes take on a fierce air that seems to reinterpret the religious content. Pollaiuolo means "poultry-keeper," perhaps a reference to his father's or another ancestor's occupation. Antonio began as a goldsmith and designer of embroideries with gold and silver thread. As one would expect, he is adept at linear precision, but his fascination with the figure in motion is a surprise. No artist since Hellenistic times had treated this theme with anything approaching his ability. Andrea del Castagno, who greatly influenced him, had tried in his *David* shield (see fig. 11.16), but his attempt seems stiff when compared with the strong movement of Pollaiuolo's figures.

About 1460 Antonio painted three large pictures representing the Labors of Hercules that are listed in the 1492 inventory of the Medici Palace. Hercules, a favorite Florentine hero, appeared on the seal of the republic in the late Duecento and is even represented among the reliefs by Andrea Pisano on the Campanile. Pollaiuolo's three paintings were among the works moved to the Palazzo dei Priori after the expulsion of the Medici, which suggests that they may have had a sharp political content. The paintings were among the first large-scale Renaissance works devoted to mythology. Because they were painted on canvas (unusual at this time; see fig. 13.24), it is possible that they originally functioned as banners for a festival or tournament. The originals are lost, but Pollaiuolo's tiny panels of *Hercules and the Hydra* and *Hercules and Antaeus* (figs. 13.2–13.3) probably preserve two of the large compositions.

As in Piero della Francesca's Montefeltro portraits (see fig. 11.31), the figures are silhouetted against earth and sky. But while Piero's figures project their control over nature, Pollaiuolo's seem to erupt from nature and to be pitted against it in mortal combat. Compositionally, the necks and tail of the hydra are counterparts of the winding river. Hercules seems almost as feral as the lion whose skin he wears and no less cruel than Antaeus, whose strength derives from his mother, the Earth. It seems that Pollaiuolo chose to represent Hercules not as a glorious hero, easily superior to the forces of evil that he is vanquishing, but as a being who accomplished his labors only with great effort. In rendering the human figure, Pollaiuolo avoided its potential nobility, emphasizing instead the strain of muscular activity. His bodies seem pushed to their physical limits. Where and how he studied bodies in motion is unknown, but there is evidence that suggests that he dissected corpses to understand how muscles, tendons, and



*Far left:* 13.2. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO. *Hercules and the Hydra.* c. 1460. Panel, $6^3/4 \times 4^3/4$" ($17.5 \times 12$ cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned for the Medici Palace.



*Left:* 13.3. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO. *Hercules and Antaeus.* c. 1460. Panel, $6^1/4 \times 3^3/4$" ($16 \times 9$ cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned for the Medici Palace.

bones are interrelated. Pollaiuolo lets our eyes wander over the rich tapestry of the backgrounds: the Arno Valley in *Hercules and the Hydra* with a microscopic Florence at the extreme left, and the seacoast in *Hercules and Antaeus*, with a little city at the right and mountains above.

Probably during the 1470s, Pollaiuolo repeated the Antaeus composition in a small bronze group (fig. 13.4) that broke the rules followed by earlier sculptors. While the contours of previous statues and groups had been restricted by the notion of an ideal composition, in Pollaiuolo's sculpture figures can move in any direction necessitated by their actions. Antonio Rossellino had led the way, in the angels holding the Madonna *tondo* above the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal (see fig. 12.14), but his figures were still constrained by the composition of the monument. Pollaiuolo's composition is determined by the actions of the figures, its contours defined by flying legs and arms, clutching toes, noses, open mouths, even unruly curls. For one of the first times since antiquity, the space surrounding a sculptural group is electrified by the energies developed within.

In his engraved *Battle of the Nudes* (fig. 13.5), the largest Florentine print of the fifteenth century, Pollaiuolo sets out to demonstrate his understanding of human anatomy. This print was widely circulated (more than forty copies survive, as well as a German woodcut copy), and as



*Above:* 13.4. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO. *Hercules and Antaeus.* Probably 1470s. Bronze, height 18" (46 cm) (including base). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Probably commissioned by a member of the Medici family for the Medici Palace.

13.5. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO. *Battle of the Nudes.* c. 1470–75. Engraving and drypoint (first state), 15⅛ × 23¼" (38.4 × 59.1 cm). Cleveland Museum of Art. This work is Antonio's only known engraving, but his skill in the technique is not surprising, given his training as a goldsmith. The Latin signature, *OPUS ANTONII POLLAIOLI FLORENTINI*, guaranteed that Pollaiuolo would receive credit for this work; this is the first Italian print to be signed. The particular print shown here is the only surviving example of the "first state." After this print was made, Pollaiuolo reworked the plate slightly and all other prints that survive represent the "second state."
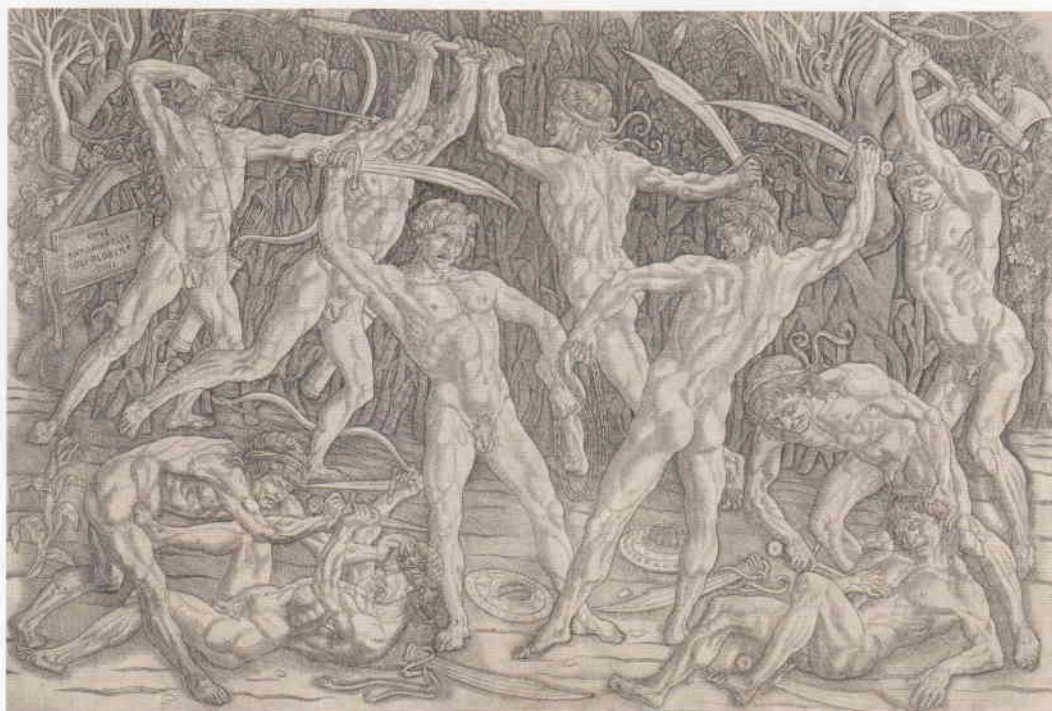
13.6. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO. *Dance of the Nudes* (portion). Late 1460s.
Fresco underdrawing. Villa La Gallina, Florence. Probably commissioned by Jacopo and
Giovanni di Orsino Lanfredini.

a result it probably had a greater influence than any of Pollaiuolo's other works. The unifying themes appear to be struggle and death, but no specific narrative subject has been determined and perhaps none was intended; this may be an early example of a work created as a demonstration of artistic skill. At the lower left a nude is about to dispatch a prostrate foe, but his victim plants a foot in his groin and aims a dagger at his eyes. Two swordsmen in the foreground may well dispose of each other, as will the figures just behind them, armed with swords and axes. At the right a man withdraws his sword from the side of his dying enemy, unaware that he is about to be slaughtered by the uplifted ax of a man behind him, who in turn does not notice the arrow aimed at him by the archer at the upper left. The composition of intertwined figures in superimposed registers that indicate depth may have been suggested by the many ancient Roman sarcophagi available in Tuscany and Rome. Pollaiuolo sets his figures against a background of vegetation that includes olive trees and grapevines. The expressions of pain or cruelty on the faces of the figures convey a horror that has its counterpart in the torments of hell seen in representations of the Last Judgment.

Equally unrestrained but of a completely different character is the dance of nude figures with which Pollaiuolo

decorated a room in the Villa La Gallina, near Florence (fig. 13.6). The painted surface is lost and the surviving underdrawing has been enhanced by a repainted dark background. The figure at the left moves in a pose frequently seen in ancient sculpture or cameos, but the other poses seem to be derived from direct observation. The wild and even bawdy nature of the movements of these figures reveals another side of Renaissance culture than the one epitomized by the altarpieces and private devotional pictures we have been studying. Those works are more likely to survive than secular decorations such as this one, and although this work is unique in Florentine Quattrocento art, it is not impossible that other works referring to human sexuality may have been created during this period; the emphasis on love in the poetry of the age supports such an interpretation. References to sexuality will become more common in the Cinquecento. However these figures are interpreted, this foot-stomping dance seems especially appropriate for a country villa.

Pollaiuolo's grandest surviving religious work, a monumental altarpiece of St. Sebastian (fig. 13.7), is a milestone in Renaissance art. The use of the triangle as a basis for a composition is not a new idea (see Masaccio's *Trinity*, fig. 8.21, for example), but Antonio's triangle seems less imposed on the figures than the product of their
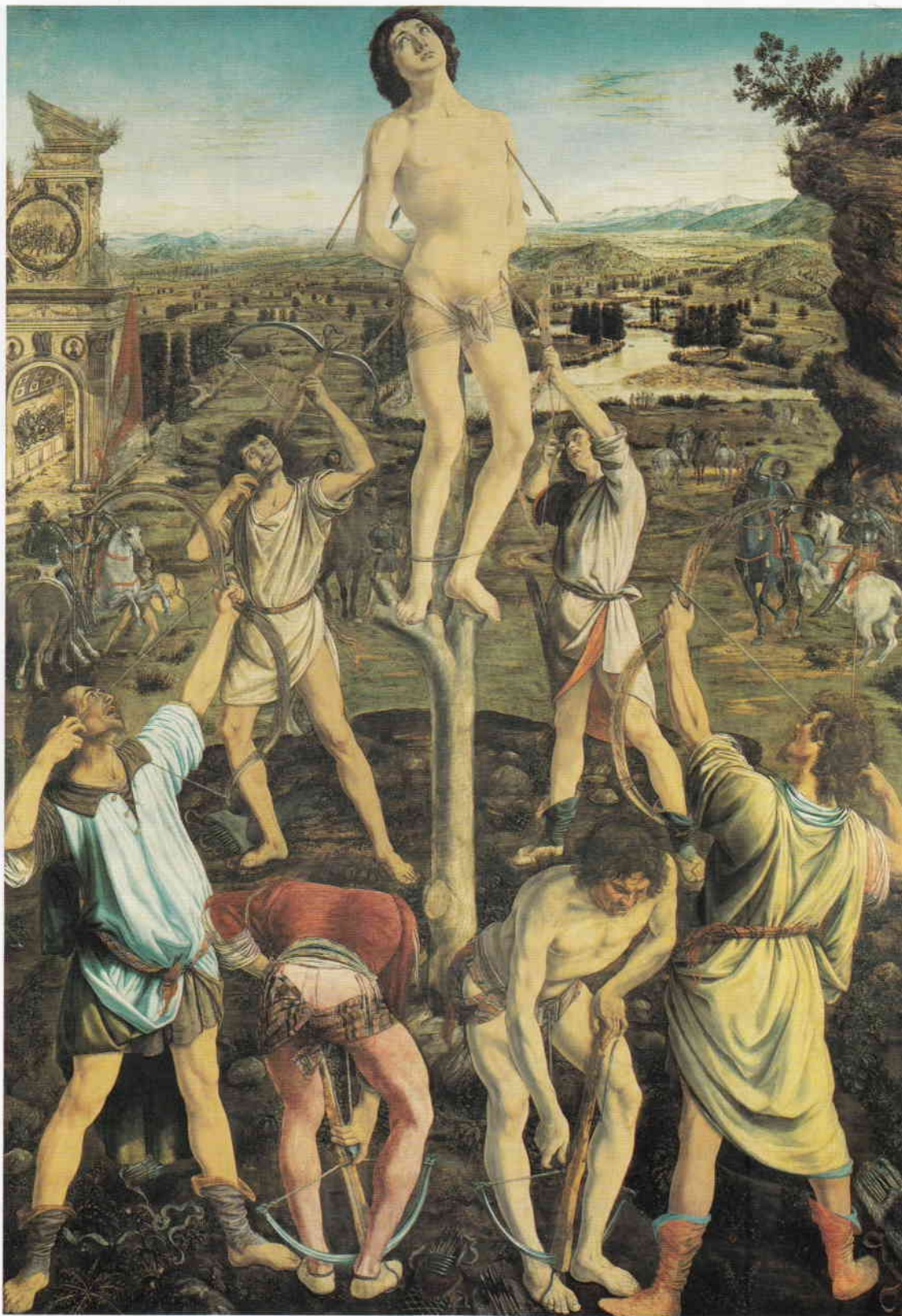
13.7. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO (and PIERO DEL POLLAIUOLO). *St. Sebastian*. 1474–75. Panel, 9'7" × 6'8" (2.92 × 2.03 m).
National Gallery, London. Commissioned by the Pucci family for the Oratory of S. Sebastiano (the Pucci family burial chapel) at
SS. Annunziata, Florence.

The patron may have been Antonio Pucci, who built the oratory in the early 1450s. The church of the Annunziata possessed a relic presumed to
be the arm bone of St. Sebastian; by devoting this altarpiece to St. Sebastian, the Pucci were allowed to house this relic in their chapel. It has been
argued that Piero painted the body and head of the saint.

movements: the minute the last arrow is discharged and the bowmen leave, the triangle will dissolve. Antonio may have left the painting of the saint to his brother Piero, but the bowmen became a showcase to demonstrate Antonio's skill. The positions of strain as the two crossbowmen wind their bows seem to display everything Antonio knew about muscular tension, while at the same time revealing his mastery of foreshortening. Passages of underdrawing visible through the thin paint layer show that Antonio at first drew the figures nude, only clothing them after the exact positions of their limbs were determined—a process that underlines the importance he allotted to accurate anatomical construction.

In reality there are only three poses among the six archers. Pollaiuolo reversed each figure, but more as if he had turned around a clay model than as if he had followed the common painter's practice of reversing a cartoon. Sculptor that he was, he may have done exactly that, although the surfaces of the bodies are so convincing that it looks as if living men posed for them while he was doing the painting. The effect of vivacity is increased by the scale, for the figures in the foreground are nearly life-sized. Michelangelo used the pose of the nude crossbowman for one of the nude youths on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling and, much later, for an angel hauling two souls into heaven in his *Last Judgment* (see fig. 20.1). Antonio's incisive contour, a kind of analytic line that describes forms in a way that helps us to understand how they revolve in depth, leads directly to Michelangelo.

The Arno Valley landscape in the background gave Pollaiuolo an opportunity to exercise his skill in the rendering of nature. The triumphal arch, included to suggest the historic period when Sebastian was martyred, is adorned with battle reliefs and the patron's Moor's-head coat of arms. In the distance, enveloped in nature, should lie Rome, which Antonio had yet to visit. He substituted Florence, with the occasional hint of a Roman theater, dome, or obelisk; the shapes of the hills are taken from those near Florence. The Arno sweeps into view, moving too rapidly to offer reflections in the manner of Piero della Francesca's still waters. As in his altarpiece for the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal (see fig. 12.13), Pollaiuolo has used oil glazes to convey distant haze, soft foliage, and rushing water. The freedom of his brushstroke, unexpected at this date, is an indication of how quickly Italian painters moved away from the precise, controlled brushstrokes of their Flemish contemporaries.

Pollaiuolo's ability to render the transitory effects of nature is also displayed in his *Apollo and Daphne* (fig. 13.8), a tiny mythological subject perhaps created to decorate a piece of furniture. Before the shimmering curves of the Arno River, the god rushes across the meadow in



13.8. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO. *Apollo and Daphne.* c. 1470–80. Panel, 11⁵⁄₈ × 7⁷⁄₈" (29.5 × 20 cm). National Gallery, London.

pursuit of Daphne. As he embraces her, he knows defeat, for her father, a river god, has answered her prayer for salvation. Daphne's left leg has taken root, her arms have become branches, and in another minute she will be fully transformed into a laurel tree. Perhaps this tiny picture was created as an allegory of the invincibility of Lorenzo de' Medici's government, for the laurel was his symbol and also that of his second cousin and neighbor, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici.

Pollaiuolo's *Portrait of a Young Woman* (fig. 13.9) is one of the last profile portraits of a woman to be produced in the Italian Quattrocento, for the type would soon give way to the three-quarter or full-face view already common for male portraits. But Antonio delights in the profile, which comes to vibrant life in his hands. His analytic line responds to every nuance of shape as it models the sitter's delicate features.

13.9. ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO. *Portrait of a Young Woman.*
1467–70. Panel, 18⅛ × 13⅜" (46 × 34 cm). Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan.

By the last decade of the Quattrocento, Pollaiuolo's influence in Florence and elsewhere was enormous. In 1489 Lorenzo de' Medici described him as the leading master of the city: "Perhaps, by the opinion of every intelligent person, there was never a better one." Antonio's final commissions were the papal tombs of Sixtus IV and his successor Innocent VIII. The huge bronze tomb of Sixtus IV (fig. 13.10) occupied the artist and his shop for nine years after the pope's death in 1484. The portrait of the recumbent pope emphasizes his hawklike features and sagging flesh. He is surrounded by reliefs representing the seven traditional Virtues (Charity, Hope, Prudence,

Fortitude, Faith, Temperance, and Justice). Below these, on the sides of the tomb, are allegorical female figures of the ten Liberal Arts to reference the pope's humanist and intellectual interests: Philosophy, Theology, Rhetoric, Grammar, Arithmetic, Astrology, Dialectic, Geometry, Music, and Perspective. It is noteworthy that Perspective has entered this august company (fig. 13.11). She holds a book and an astrolabe, as well as an oak branch, because the pope was a member of the Della Rovere family, whose name means oak. The astrolabe suggests that during the Renaissance navigation and exploration were considered part of the discipline of perspective.

13.10. ANTONIO DEL
POLLAIUOLO. Tomb of Pope
Sixtus IV della Rovere. 1484–93.
Bronze, length 14'7" (4.45 m). Museo
Storico Artistico, St. Peter's, Rome.
Commissioned by Cardinal Giuliano
della Rovere for Sixtus IV della
Rovere's burial chapel in Old St.
Peter's, Rome.



13.11. ANTONIO DEL
POLLAIUOLO. Perspective,
detail of fig. 13.10.

## Andrea del Verrocchio

Although "Verrocchio," the nickname of Andrea di Michele Cioni (1435–1488), means "true eye," it refers not to exceptional powers of vision but to a Florentine family who were his early patrons. His training in the arts of painting and sculpture is still uncertain. Verrocchio's most notable painting is the *Baptism of Christ* (figs. 13.12, 16.11), for which his pupil Leonardo da Vinci painted

some remarkable passages that will be discussed later (see p. 450). This is perhaps the first time this subject, which was important in Florence because John the Baptist is the city's patron saint, was treated in an altarpiece, and Verrocchio's composition is suitably simple and grand. The figures are loosely posed in front of wide views into a distant landscape. The bony forms, the emphasis on muscles and tendons, and the play of light over torsos, limbs, and hands are analyzed with the care of Pollaiuolo



13.12. ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO and LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Baptism of Christ.* Begun 1468 or 1471; completed c. 1476. Panel, 69½ × 59½" (1.8 × 1.52 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned for S. Salvi, Florence.

but without his interest in movement. The Baptist looks at Christ with intense devotion, while Christ looks downward and inward.

The *Baptism* is closely related to Verrocchio's *Christ and St. Thomas* at Orsanmichele (fig. 13.13; see also fig. 7.9),



13.13. ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO. *Christ and St. Thomas.* c. 1466–83. Bronze, height of Christ 7'6½" (2.3 m). Orsanmichele, Florence. (Marble niche by Donatello, c. 1422–25; commissioned by the Parte Guelfa.) Verrocchio's group was commissioned by the Tribunale di Mercanzia. This historic photograph shows the group in the niche for which it was commissioned; it has now been replaced with a copy.

an impressive demonstration of his skill in composition, knowledge of anatomy, and depth of feeling. The group is enclosed in a marble tabernacle commissioned in the early 1420s by the Parte Guelfa, then the dominant force in Florence, and was designed by Donatello to enclose his gilded bronze statue of St. Louis of Toulouse. With the rise of the Medici, the Parte Guelfa was eclipsed, and in 1463 their niche was sold to the magistrates of the Mercanzia, which acted as a tribunal to adjudicate disputes between merchants. Donatello's statue was removed. The subject of Verrocchio's group may have been chosen because the Mercanzia insisted that they were engaged in a search for truth and required, as had Thomas, tangible evidence.

In interpreting the subject, Verrocchio clearly wanted to bring out the emotional intensity of the moment when the resurrected Christ invites Thomas to confirm his identity by touching the wound in his side. Thomas stands slightly outside the niche, overlapping the left column, and seems to be moving inward toward Christ, who is posed on an elevated base. To fit into the limited space, the figures had to be smaller than Donatello's *St. Louis*. When they were removed for safekeeping during World War II, it was discovered that they have no backs; from behind they are hollow shells of bronze.

Drama is centered less in the expressions on the calm faces than in the calculated space between the figures—the wound revealed by one hand, approached by another on a diagonal. The drapery patterns are not used to indicate the pose, as they had been in earlier Quattrocento sculptures; rather, the complex folds shatter the forms into facets of light and dark, the sculptural counterpart of Pollaiuolo's free brushwork, conveying the rhythm of the figures but not their mass. According to sources, Donatello's device of using cloth soaked in hardened slip (see p. 190) was emulated by Verrocchio, who substituted plaster for clay. The resulting restless patterns of the drapery and the rippling curls communicate the excitement inherent in this event. Words on the border of Christ's mantle state, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). A recent cleaning of this impressive work has revealed the high level of Verrocchio's craftsmanship and detailing. When the group was placed in its niche in 1483, the diarist Luca Landucci described the head of Christ as "the most beautiful head of the Savior that has yet been made."

Verrocchio's *Portrait of a Lady with Flowers* (fig. 13.14) is the first three-quarter-length sculpted portrait since antiquity. When compared to earlier painted portraits, it offers a new simplicity. The woman's hair, parted in the middle, is drawn to the sides and then allowed to escape in clustered curls. The costume is an unadorned tunic. The inclusion of her sensitive hands allows Verrocchio to

13.14. ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO. *Portrait of a Lady with Flowers*. Late 1470s. Marble, height 23⅝" (61 cm). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. The sitter has often been identified, but without proof, as Lucrezia Donati, mistress of Lorenzo de' Medici.

comment more fully on her personality; with grace she holds a bouquet of flowers to her chest. This is the new naturalism of the 1470s, expressed in every detail, and suggesting in marble the nature of flesh even where covered by what seems to be a translucent garment.

Verrocchio's bronze *David* (fig. 13.15) is another demonstration of Verrocchio's skill in representing textures and details. He may have conceived the figure as a response to Donatello's bronze *David* (see fig. 10.22), then also in the Medici Palace. Verrocchio avoids the nudity of Donatello's interpretation, clothing his figure in a leather jerkin and skirt. This more modest version seems to fit the restraint characteristic of the later Medici. The difficult *contrapposto* and uncertain expression of Donatello's figure is here replaced with a calm and relaxed David whose face has a trace of a smile.

Verrocchio's final work is also his grandest. The *condottiere* Bartolommeo Colleoni (d. 1475) left a considerable sum of money to the Venetian Republic for a bronze equestrian monument to himself to be set up in Piazza San



13.15. ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO. *David*. c. 1470s. Bronze, with traces of gilded details, height 49⅝" (1.26 m). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Commissioned by Lorenzo de' Medici for the Medici Palace. Sold to the Signoria of the city in 1476 for 145 florins.

Marco, center of Venetian life. The authorities relegated the statue to a less important square, in front of the Scuola di San Marco (fig. 13.16), a solution that conformed to the letter of Colleoni's stipulation, if not the spirit. When and how Verrocchio received the commission is not clear, but in 1483 a monk recorded seeing on exhibition in Venice three colossal horses by three

**13.16. ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO** (completed by **ALESSANDRO LEOPARDI**).
*Equestrian Monument of Bartolommeo Colleoni.* c. 1481–96. Bronze, height approx. 13' (4 m)
without the base. 🏛 Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo (Zanipolo), Venice. Commissioned by the
Venetian Republic with funds left by Bartolommeo Colleoni.

competing masters. Verrocchio died before he could cast his clay model, and the bronze version was made by the Venetian founder Alessandro Leopardi, who also designed the statue's base. The visual evidence suggests that in many details Leopardi lost the vitality that Verrocchio would probably have achieved had he been able to do the chasing himself; this is particularly true of the ornament, mane, and tail. However, as one comes upon the statue while crossing a little bridge over a canal, the effect is stupendous.

Verrocchio abandoned the static concept of the equestrian monument seen in earlier examples (see fig. 10.23). Now the general, helmeted and armed with a mace, seems to be urging his charger into battle. In mass and silhouette the group commands the surrounding space. The horse's left foreleg steps freely, his veins and muscles swell, his head is turned, and his muzzle drawn in. The rider stands in the stirrups, his torso twisted in opposition to the movement of the horse's head, dilated eyes staring, jaw clenched. The effect is dramatic and commanding.

## Renaissance *Cassoni*

We studied a painting removed from a *cassone*, a Florentine wedding chest, earlier when we looked at the works of Francesco Pesellino (see fig. 12.28). Here we illustrate an example of a complete *cassone*, one of a pair (fig. 13.17). In this case we know who commissioned the work and its pendant, who the artists were, who the bridal couple were, and how much it cost. The painters were Jacopo del Sellaio and Biagio d'Antonio, and the woodworker who built the



13.17. JACOPO DEL SELLAIO and BIAGIO D'ANTONIO, with the woodworker ZANOBI DI DOMENICO. One of a pair of *cassoni* made for the Morelli–Nerli wedding in 1472. Tempera paint on wood, gold leaf, height 83½" (212 cm); width 75" (193 cm); depth 30" (76.2 cm). Courtauld Gallery, London.

The lower scene is *Camillus Defeating the Gauls*, the upper, *Horatius Cocles Defending the Bridge against the Etruscans*. The subjects found on the pendant are *Mucius Scaevola Shows his Courage by Burning his Right Hand* and *Camillus with the Schoolmaster of Falerii*; the end figures represent virtues. This *cassone* and its pendant are rare examples in which the attached backpieces (*spalliere*) survive intact, although some of the framing and woodwork have been restored. When Donna Vaggia di Tanai di Francesco di Nerli married Lorenzo di Matteo di Morello in 1472, she brought a dowry of 2,000 florins. The pair of *cassoni* were commissioned by Lorenzo for approximately 61 florins, about the same as the annual salary for a skilled laborer; the fact that this was the largest sum Lorenzo spent on a single object in his house indicates the importance of *cassoni* in the culture of the Florentine Renaissance.

chest was Zanobi di Domenico. Such collaboration was common in the Florentine workshop tradition, and may have been frequent when works had to be finished for a certain occasion, such as a wedding. The choice of themes drawn from ancient history is in the *cassoni* tradition; here all four scenes represent moments of heroism or good judgment and would seem to be directed toward the groom, who commissioned the two chests. The figures on the sides are seated allegories of virtues. The addition of a back panel (the *spalliera*) here, which allows for a second narrative scene on each chest, shows a later development in *cassoni* design and indicates the growing elegance characteristic of the Florentine home in the later Quattrocento.

# Alessandro Botticelli

The leader of our second, poetic current in later Quattrocento Florentine art is Alessandro (or Sandro) Botticelli (1445–1510). His given name was Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi, but his older brother, a successful broker, was nicknamed "il Botticello" ("the Keg"). Sandro appears to have been cared for by this brother, and it was therefore natural to call him "del Botticello," which in time became "Botticelli." In his art he withdrew from the world around him and moved away from the physical vitality that characterizes the works of Pollaiuolo and Verrocchio. His style emphasized contour and line in complex and beautiful compositions that can be compared to the many layers of sixteenth-century polyphonic music. Nevertheless, Botticelli was also recognized by Fra Luca Pacioli, follower of Piero della Francesca, as one of the great experts of perspective. Although his work is sometimes praised for its gentleness, an Old Testament scene featuring the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (see fig. 13.19) reveals the dramatic intensity of which he was capable.

Botticelli started as an assistant to Fra Filippo Lippi, and before Filippo died he entrusted Botticelli with the guidance of his son Filippino, who was only twelve years younger. Later, Botticelli was active in the shop of Verrocchio, along with the young Leonardo da Vinci. Almost from the start, however, his own style was antiatmospheric, antioptical, and antiscientific.

The subject of Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi (fig. 13.18) is common in the later Quattrocento, and Botticelli painted it at least seven times. As members of the Company of the Magi confraternity, the Medici family were traditionally represented as the magi (see p. 313). The aged Cosimo, who died before Botticelli's picture was painted, is here represented as the oldest magus, kneeling before the Christ Child. He holds the child's feet, covering them with a veil that drapes over his shoulders. This action parallels that of a priest at the benediction of the sacrament, when he covers his hands with a veil to hold the foot of a monstrance containing the Eucharist, the body of Christ, for the adoration of the faithful. Botticelli's picture can be interpreted as a reference to the Florentine ritual, in which the Medici took part; to its religious import, then, a political ingredient must be added.

The star of Bethlehem hovers over the Virgin and Child, who are enthroned upon a rock that hints at Calvary. A gentle Joseph stands behind and slightly above them. By raising these figures and placing them back from the foreground, Botticelli draws us into the scene. Below the first magus the two other magi kneel in intense conversation; they are apparently portraits of Giovanni (d. 1463) and Piero the Gouty (d. 1469), Cosimo's sons. The youth at the extreme left, embraced by a friend as he listens to the words of a somewhat older mentor, may be Lorenzo. At the right, a dark-haired youth in profile, gazing downward, resembles surviving portraits of Giuliano, Lorenzo's brother (see fig. 12.5). The faces, foreshortened from above, below, and behind, are projected with equal sharpness by means of sculptural contours and the incisive light. The young man in the gold-colored cloak at the right, who gazes rather arrogantly outward, has generally been accepted as a self-portrait. Here the artist is more prominent than the patron, who has been identified as the white-haired man looking out toward us in the upper right group. Why he chose to honor the Medici in Botticelli's painting remains unclear.

Botticelli's first monumental fresco commission was to depict rebels of the Pazzi Conspiracy on the walls of the Florentine Customs House (see p. 297). These were later destroyed, but possibly their success (certainly not their subject, as Pope Sixtus IV was implicated in the conspiracy) led to Botticelli being called to Rome in 1481. He went with his fellow Florentines Cosimo Rosselli and Domenico del Ghirlandaio as well as Perugino, from Perugia (see p. 369). The commission was to participate in the decoration of a chapel constructed by Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere, which was named the Cappella Sistina in honor of its patron Sixtus (Sisto in Italian), hence the English name, Sistine Chapel.

The chapel was intended to accommodate not only the Masses and other services of the papal court, but also the meetings of cardinals. Today only tourists with a special interest in Quattrocento painting manage to detach themselves from Michelangelo's later frescoes on the ceiling and altar wall to contemplate the works on the side walls (see fig. 14.17). These scenes from the lives of Moses and Christ were chosen, at least in part, to represent episodes in the Old and New Testaments that justified the claims of the papacy to universality. Like Roman cycles in

**13.18. SANDRO BOTTICELLI.** *Adoration of the Magi.* c. 1476. Panel, 43¾ × 52¾" (1.1 × 1.34 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by the merchant Guasparre dal Lama, whose name, the Italian version of Caspar, explains the choice of subject. It was placed on the altar of his modest funerary chapel at Sta. Maria Novella, Florence (see fig. 2.35). The altar was dedicated on January 6, the feast day of the three kings.

general, they may well contain additional layers of meaning, including references to the particular patron. Vasari argued that Botticelli was in charge of the decorative program, but an attempt has also been made to place Perugino in this role.

If anyone exercised a commanding position with regard to the program, it must have been the pope. Moreover, some credit ought to be given to the common sense of the artists, none of whom was likely to want his paintings to appear out of harmony with the others. In the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal, for example (see fig. 12.13), visitors are still struck by the decorative beauty of the ensemble, yet the architect died before the work was begun, the

sculptors and painters represented conflicting tendencies, the paintings were an afterthought, and no one artist stayed on the job from beginning to end. In the case of the Sistine Chapel, it is probably safe to suppose that the pope and his advisers determined the subjects and gave the artists guidelines as to unity, leaving the artists to work out among themselves consistency of scale, horizon line, palette, and the like. On closer examination, however, it becomes evident that none of the original four artists—or Pintoricchio or Luca Signorelli, who were later brought onto the project—was willing to sacrifice completely his artistic identity. Discrepancies of expression and even of compositional principles are evident, and

none of the artists left Rome with a trace of any of the others in his style.

In each of the surviving frescoes of the Quattrocento cycle (two would be destroyed by Michelangelo when he frescoed the chapel's altar wall with the *Last Judgment*; see fig. 20.1), the foreground is almost filled with figures that narrate the principal incidents and are scaled at roughly two-fifths the height of the scene. The vanishing point for the background landscapes—which should govern the recession of the architecture as well, but does not always do so—is placed one-fifth above their heads. This two-fifths, one-fifth, two-fifths horizontal division of the scenes, crossed by a vertical division into thirds, is respected throughout the series. With typical Florentine rigor, Botticelli treats each of his scenes as a kind of triptych, grouping the figures and vertical masses such as architecture and trees into a central block flanked by two wings.

Botticelli's *Punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram* (fig. 13.19) narrates how these three men challenged Aaron's right to the high priesthood. When they inappropriately assumed his role by offering incense to the Lord,

they were swallowed up by the earth (Numbers 16:1–40). This unusual subject would appeal to a patron interested in asserting his power, and the fresco is opposite Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (see fig. 14.16), another scene emphasizing papal authority. In Botticelli's fresco, the story, narrated from left to right, is fused with other incidents concerning Moses. At the left the earth opens up; only two figures are shown—one must already have vanished—and flames arise to consume them. In the center, six figures offering false fire to the Lord are consumed by fire from heaven. On the right Moses seeks refuge from the seditious Israelites who tried to stone him. Botticelli has added an inscription from St. Paul to his representation of the Arch of Constantine in Rome: "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Hebrews 5:4). Read together with the altar, the punishment, and the ancient triumphal arch, the narrative prefigures the mission of the Roman Church, especially as Aaron wears a papal tiara as a reference to the patron.

The rays issuing from Moses' forehead have a curious history. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai the



13.19. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.* 1481–82. Fresco, 11'5½" × 18'8½" (3.5 × 5.7 m). Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome. (For a diagram of the side walls of the chapel see fig. 14.18.) Commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere. Botticelli had to lodge a complaint against the pope in order to be fully paid for his work in the chapel.

second time, the biblical text says that rays of light shone from his face. In translating this into Latin, St. Jerome balked at attributing light to anyone who antedated Christ. The Hebrew word for "rays" could also be rendered "horns," the translation chosen by Jerome, and so Moses is often represented with horns. In St. Paul's Epistle, however, the word "rays" was allowed to stand. Botticelli's Moses is a compromise: two horns made of rays.

The *Adoration of the Magi* in Washington, D.C. (fig. 13.20) is more classical than the Uffizi *Adoration* (see fig. 13.18), and may reflect the influence of Botticelli's stay in Rome. The looser figural arrangements of the earlier picture have given way to a circle in depth, open in the foreground to give a view of the Virgin and Child. The ruins suggest a once imposing Roman monument, with Joseph's new roof replacing an entablature stone about to topple at the left. The shed's beams recall the open timber ceilings of the Early Christian basilicas Botticelli must have seen in Rome.

Botticelli chose the point of view of a hypothetical spectator standing at the center and well within the picture, on a line with the two magi nearest the Madonna. The other worshippers, and we with them, are distanced from the scene by the width of the grassy lawn, which we instinctively attempt to traverse in order to bring the architectural perspective to a resolution. We are caught up involuntarily in the worshippers' movement toward the sacred figures. Botticelli must have been aware of the teachings of the Platonic Academy formed within the court of Lorenzo de' Medici. One of the academy's doctrines was the principle of *desío* (desire, longing, yearning), by which the soul, in its earthly exile, could mystically traverse the gulf separating it from its home in God. In the Washington painting, such *desío*, already nascent in the Uffizi picture, activates the figures in the composition. Because of the difficulty in dating most of Botticelli's works, it is unclear whether the Washington *Adoration* was conceived before or after the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* by Leonardo (see fig.



13.20. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Adoration of the Magi*. c. 1478–80. Tempera and oil on poplar, 26³/4 × 40³/16" (70 × 104.2 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Mellon Collection). Some of the natural pigments in this painting have darkened: the greens, for example, have become brown and the medium blues have become dark blues.

13.21. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Madonna of the Magnificat.* c. 1480. Panel, diameter 46" (120 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

16.16). In any event, the two paintings cannot be separated by more than months, and the two Verrocchio pupils almost certainly knew each other's compositions. They may even have quarreled about them, as we know they did over perspective and landscape. In the upper right background of both images grooms are restraining unruly horses, although Leonardo's interpretation is more tempestuous. Leonardo wrote that Botticelli claimed it was possible to paint a landscape by throwing a sponge filled with paint at the panel and turning the smears into landscape forms. From Leonardo's point of view, these would be poor landscapes, but to our eyes they are still acceptable. In its contours the landscape here enhances the movement of the figures, while its blue-green color provides a foil for the strong reds, blues, and yellows of the costumes.

Botticelli's *Madonna of the Magnificat* (fig. 13.21) was, like the earlier *tondo* by Domenico Veneziano (see fig. 11.7), probably a wedding present or a gift made at the time of the birth of a child. The change in diameter from 33 to 46 inches (83.8 to 120 cm) is typical of the increasing size of domestic objects during the second half of the Quattrocento, when Florentine patrons required larger and more sumptuous objects for their homes.

Botticelli's mastery of composition is evident in this elegant picture. Using the circular format as a base, he curves his figures around the periphery, leaving the center open for a view into a delicate landscape. The two sides are joined by the angels who reach up to place a filigree crown on the Virgin's head, crowning her as Queen of Heaven, and by the fluttering folds of her transparent scarf. The

name of the picture is derived from the hymn that the Virgin has just written in the book held open by angels: "Behold my soul doth magnify the Lord," words that she spoke to Gabriel in accepting the Annunciation. As we watch, she dips her pen in the inkpot to continue the canticle.

Like Pollaiuolo, Botticelli was called upon to paint the mythological subjects becoming fashionable at the court of Lorenzo and among the Florentine patriciate. Although the graceful figures in these paintings are depicted in Botticelli's characteristic style, they have the gravity he must have seen in ancient marble reliefs in Rome. Botticelli's mythologies have been explained through the writings of the Florentine Neo-Platonists, notably Marsilio Ficino, but the interpretations are complicated by the kaleidoscopic nature of Neo-Platonic writings, which demonstrate how humanists can derive different meanings from the same ancient legend. In the following discussions, some persuasive elements have been selected from still-controversial interpretations, and new elements added. Some day perhaps a "lucky find," as the art historian E.H. Gombrich put it, will reveal exactly what these images were intended to communicate.

While the gods of ancient Greece and Rome had survived in one form or another throughout the Middle Ages, especially as personifications of the planets exercising power over human destiny, they had lost their ancient appearance. In Botticelli's works they reappear on a grand scale, without much visual resemblance to ancient forms or representations, and with an allegorical meaning paralleling that of Christian subjects. Botticelli's *Venus and Mars*

(fig. 13.22), for example, has little in common with the nude Venuses of antiquity. Here we behold a lovely young woman, barefoot but clothed in voluminous folds that conceal her waist. Mars, a slender youth, lies on the ground, naked except for a strip of white cloth. While he sleeps, four impudent baby satyrs—among the first, if not the first, satyrs to make an appearance in Renaissance painting—play with his armor and spear, and one of them blows through a conch shell into his ear to demonstrate how soundly he is sleeping.

The painting has sometimes been connected with a tournament of 1475, celebrated in Poliziano's poem *La giostra*, in which Giuliano de' Medici received the victor's crown from Simonetta Vespucci. Internal evidence indeed suggests a connection with the Vespucci family, Botticelli's neighbors, for the wasps buzzing about the head of Mars refer to the Vespucci coat of arms ("vespucci" in Italian means "little wasps"). Several passages from classical literature were probably used by the humanist(s) who devised the painting's iconography. Especially relevant is Marsilio Ficino's astrological characterization of Mars as "outstanding in strength among the planets because he makes men stronger, but Venus masters him. ... Venus ... often checks his malignance ... she seems to master Mars, but Mars never masters Venus." Part of the picture's meaning was surely the conquering power of love, even over war, and the subjugation of violence by the powers of culture and the intellect. This is a lofty message, of course, but Mars' deep sleep can also refer to another theme common in ancient and medieval writings: the ability of Venus—or of any woman—to defeat the male with strenuous sexual



13.22. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Venus and Mars*. c. 1483. Panel, 27¼ × 68¼ (69 × 173.5 cm). National Gallery, London. Perhaps commissioned by a member of the Vespucci family. The size and the shape suggest that this was a *spalliera* panel, painted to be placed over a chest, bench, or some other piece of household furniture (see fig. 13.17).

activity. Mars' sleep and Venus' satisfied smile suggest that such an interpretation is possible. Although it is difficult to re-create the sense of humor of earlier periods, this interpretation suggests that humor may have been a part of the artist's and/or patron's original intent. Some may have considered Botticelli's painting scandalous, but it is not unexpected in this period; bawdy humor about sexual activity can be found in at least one popular Florentine Quattrocento print.

The setting of Botticelli's *Primavera* ("Spring," fig. 13.23) is a grove of dark orange trees, whose intertwined branches and golden fruit fill the upper portion of the picture. Between the trunks one glimpses the sky and, at one point, a hint of a distant landscape. Just off-center stands a modest figure, one hand raised as if in benediction. At the right Zephyrus, the wind god, enters the scene in pursuit of the virgin nymph Chloris, from whose mouth flowers seem to issue; in the legend Zephyrus rapes Chloris and then marries her. Chloris is then transformed into Flora, goddess of Spring, who scatters blossoms from her flower-embroidered garment. Because the picture represents the eternal spring that flourished in Venus' garden, Flora is a key figure in decoding the meaning. On the left Mercury raises his caduceus to snag and dispel the storm clouds trying to enter the garden. The three figures dancing in a ring are the Graces; above, the blindfolded Cupid shoots a blazing golden arrow in their direction. The figure in the center, so much like one of Botticelli's Madonnas, is Venus, goddess of Love and Beauty and also, in this context, Marriage.

The *Primavera* can probably be identified with a painting documented in the town house of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici in 1498. In about 1478 Marsilio Ficino wrote a letter to Lorenzo, who was then only fourteen or fifteen years old, in which he described the virtues of Venus:

> Venus, that is to say, Humanitas ... is a nymph of excellent comeliness, born of heaven and more than others beloved by God all highest. Her soul and mind are Love and Charity, her eyes Dignity and Magnanimity, the hands Liberality and Magnificence, the feet Comeliness and Modesty. The whole, then, is Temperance and Honesty, Charm and Splendor. Oh, what exquisite beauty! ... My dear Lorenzo, a nymph of such nobility has been wholly given into your hands! If you were to unite with her in wedlock and claim her as yours, she would make all your years sweet.

To Ficino, then, Venus represented the moral qualities that a cultivated Florentine patrician woman should possess. Ficino's passage may help to explain the restraint that characterizes Botticelli's elegant interpretation of Venus.

Botticelli's chaste, modest, and submissive Venus may have been meant as a model for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco's bride, Semiramide d'Appiano. These qualities are emphasized in humanist writings by Alberti and Lionardo Bruni as appropriate for the ideal woman and perfect wife. Bruni wrote that women should especially study the Roman poets, for "in no other writers can be found so many examples of womanly modesty and goodness ... the finest pattern of the wifely arts."

The Three Graces dancing in Venus' garden are symbols of the beauty and grace that Venus offers to the world. Botticelli's interpretation of these figures suggests that he or the patron were inspired by Alberti, who recommended that painters try to re-create an ancient work described by Seneca in which the Graces were shown nude or in transparent garments, dancing together with intertwined hands. Botticelli may also have been inspired by surviving sculptural compositions from antiquity showing three nude Graces, their hands joined; in one such example, one figure is seen from the rear and the other two from the front, as in his painting. The loose, flowing hair of Botticelli's figures indicates that they are unmarried virgins.

Scholars have proposed various explanations for the painting based on the writings of Horace, Ovid, Lucretius, and Columella, but there are also noteworthy Florentine elements. The Roman poet Claudian, who in the Renaissance was believed to have been a Florentine, wrote that all clouds were excluded from Venus' Garden of the Hesperides, where her "golden apples" (that is, oranges) grew. Botticelli's garden boasts no fewer than forty-two varieties of plant common to Tuscany in the spring. Mercury, armed and helmeted, stands guard in a pose derived from the *Davids* by Donatello and Verrocchio (see figs. 10.22, 13.15). Venus, moreover, is decorously clothed and wears the headdress of a Florentine married woman. Cleaning has revealed the delicate lines of breath from Zephyrus' mouth that instilled new life in the nymph Chloris, whom he married, so that she could be reborn as Flora; this painting was appropriately placed outside the nuptial chamber of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, whose wedding was planned for May 1482.

The last word about this perpetually alluring allegory has yet to be written. For example, numerous associations with the Medici can be made. The golden orbs of the orange grove, so similar to the one that separates foreground from background in Uccello's *San Romano* panels (see figs. 11.5–11.6), must have suggested to a Florentine Quattrocento eye the red *palle* (balls) of the Medici coat of arms. Also, Mercury's rose-colored chlamys is strewn with golden flames, an attribute of the god but one that also belongs to St. Lawrence (Lorenzo). They decorate the saint's vestments in Fra Angelico's San Marco altarpiece

13.23. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Primavera*. c. 1482(?). Panel, 6'8" × 10'4" (2 × 3.1 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici for his Florentine palace at the time of his wedding.

(see fig. 9.4), made for Cosimo de' Medici, and in many other representations, and the meteor showers that descend on the earth in August each year are known in Italy as "fires of St. Lawrence" because they occur at the time of his feast. Venus' gown is also bordered at the neck with golden flames, while loops of flames encircle her breasts. Finally, Mercury also bore responsibility for doctors, whose symbol, the caduceus, he bears; Medici means "doctors," and the Medici patron saints were the doctors Cosmas and Damian.

Botticelli's mythologies typify the learning and social graces of a society intent on reviving antiquity on a new scale, but less for the moral lessons that interested Alberti than for private delight. Botticelli's painting gave this rarefied ideal a perfect embodiment, and at the same time raised it to the level of poetry. In front of the dark green leaves and golden fruit of the grove that shuts out the world, the pale, long-limbed figures move with a melodious grace, their golden tresses and diaphanous garments rippling about them. These lovely creatures seem almost weightless, and the composition seems to waver as the spring winds blow through it. Yet there is nothing hesitant

about Botticelli's style. In his hands energetic patterns of line are united with lighting from the side that emphasizes the sculptural relief of every feature, every lock of hair, every jewel. All surfaces are smooth, all masses firm, no edge is veiled in atmosphere, no brushwork visible.

Slightly smaller than the *Primavera*, painted on canvas (a surface at this time usually reserved for ceremonial banners), and recorded in no Quattrocento inventory, the *Birth of Venus* (fig. 13.24) was seen, together with the *Primavera*, in Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco's villa at Castello by Vasari in the mid-sixteenth century. The suggestion that the painting might originally have served a function different from that of the *Primavera* is supported not only by the unusual use of canvas but also by the more simplified composition and iconography. Whether it might have been a banner for a procession or festival is uncertain, but we know that Botticelli painted such works because he is documented in 1475 as painting a now-lost standard for a joust.

Although the *Birth of Venus* corresponds to a passage in Poliziano's *La giostra*, E.H. Gombrich related it to Ficino's interpretation of the mythical birth of the full-grown
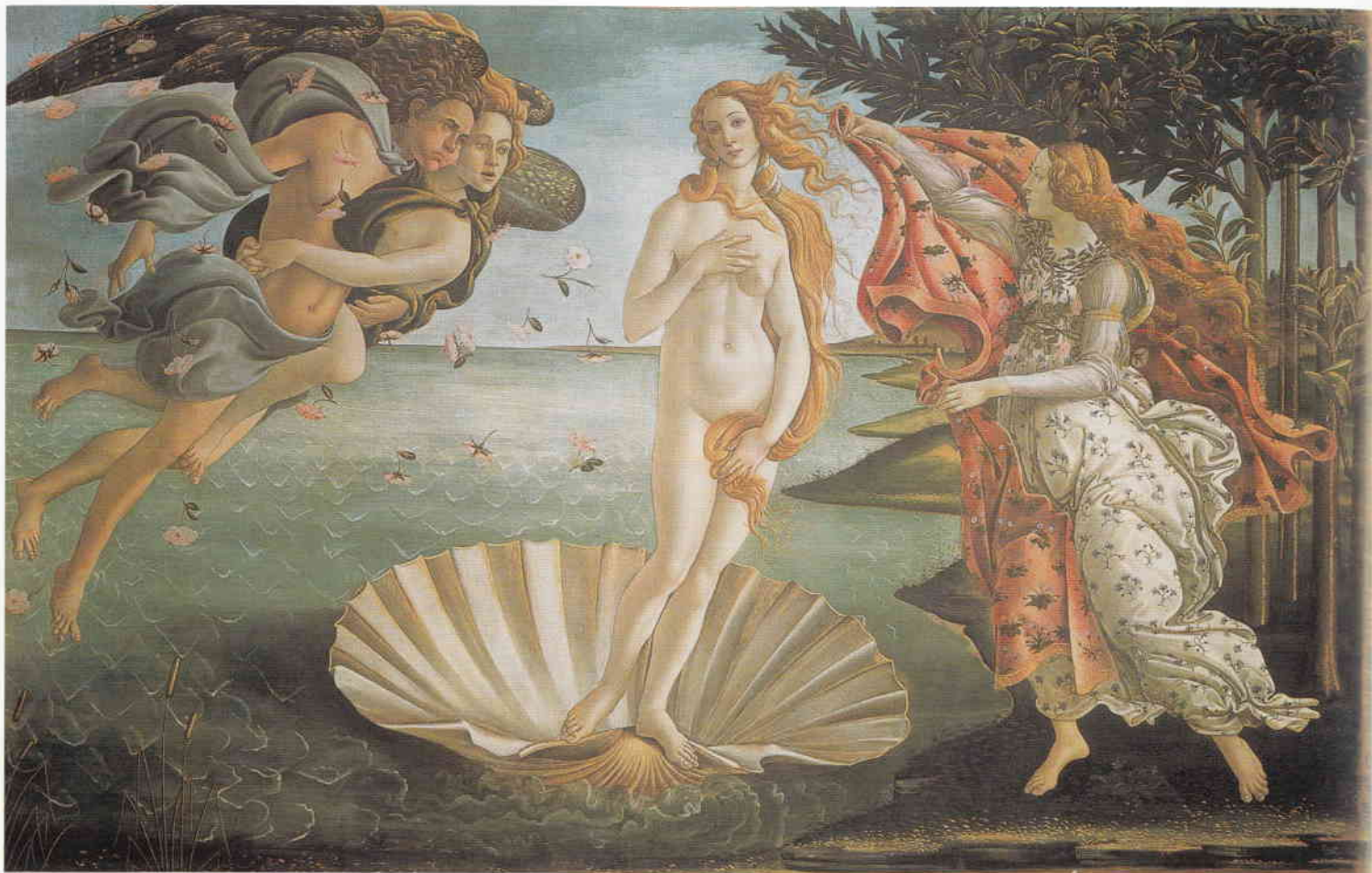
13.24. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Birth of Venus.* c. 1484–86. Canvas, 5'9" × 9'2" (1.75 × 2.8 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned by a member of the Medici family.

Venus after the sea had been fertilized by the severed genitals of her father, Uranus. Ficino saw this birth as an allegory of the birth of beauty in the mind of humanity. Botticelli's Venus, arisen from the sea, stands on the front edge of a shell, while Zephyrus and a nymph waft her to shore, where she will be robed by a waiting Hour, one of her traditional attendants. The figure of Venus is derived from ancient statues of the *Venus pudica* (modest Venus) type, in which the figure tries to hide her nakedness with her hands. In Botticelli's variation, her long golden hair sweeps gracefully about her, its flowing lines enhancing the willowy figure. The neckline of the waiting Hour is wreathed in laurel, presumably another Medicean reference. The sea itself is simply rendered, with V-shapes suggesting waves. Flowers drift through the air, and Venus' unearthly beauty is heightened by the use of gold pigment to highlight her hair; Botticelli's use of gold here may have been inspired by Donatello's use of golden highlights for his *Penitent Magdalen* (see fig. 12.6). The qualities of atmosphere and mass that so interested Renaissance artists are irrelevant in this picture, which is dependent on the delicacy of Botticelli's line. His proportions show here their greatest exaggeration, yet despite this, the long neck and torrent of hair help to create an entrancing figure.

Botticelli's use of a sinuous line that conveys movement is even more clearly evident in his unfinished drawing of *Abundance or Autumn* (fig. 13.25). He began with black chalk, then consolidated and refined his ideas with brown ink using both a pen for delicate linear definition and a brush to create areas of subtle shadow. The final step was to add highlights in white to enhance both the three-dimensionality of the forms and the effect of refined movement. The areas that were not reinforced with ink—the cornucopia and two *putti* to the left—reveal the suggestive nature of the initial chalk drawing. The right leg of the *putto* directly to the left of the female figure was drawn in two different positions; had Botticelli completed the drawing, he would have had to select which he felt was more effective. No final work corresponds to this exquisite drawing and the fact that it remains unfinished suggests that the project for which it was intended was abandoned.

13.25. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Abundance or Autumn*. 1470s (?). Black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown wash, white heightening on pink prepared paper, 12½ × 10" (31.7 × 25.3 cm). British Museum, London. The drawing was originally attached to a mount, suggesting to one author that it had once formed part of Vasari's book of drawings (see p. 37).

**13.26. SANDRO BOTTICELLI.** *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo de' Medici.* c. 1475. Panel, 22⅝ × 17⅜" (57.5 × 44 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. The medal that the man is holding, which is executed in raised gilded gesso, seems to be a plaster cast of the medal shown in figure 6.2.

The sitter in Botticelli's *Portrait of a Man with a Medal of Cosimo de' Medici* (fig. 13.26) may be Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, since the features resemble his profile portrait on a medal; whoever he was, he clearly felt a need to demonstrate his allegiance to the Medici. The bold placement of the head against the sky instead of a neutral background is unexpected in a portrait painted at this time, and Botticelli demonstrates his ability to produce a powerful and strongly individualized presence.

The *Annunciation* for Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi (fig. 13.27) shows the increasing intensity of Botticelli's later religious paintings. The event takes place in a room furnished only with Mary's reading desk, but through the open door we look into her closed garden. The barrenness of the architecture serves as a foil for the emotional figures. Mary, whose pose is ultimately derived from Donatello's

*Annunciation* (see fig. 10.21), sways as if caught in a rushing wind. The biblical text says only that "her heart was disturbed within her," but here she seems about to swoon. Her eyes are almost closed, her features pale. Botticelli's flowing line creates a passionate emotional expression.

The strong emotions, severe architectural forms, and bold, clashing colors of Botticelli's late style suggest that he may have been a willing listener to the fiery sermons of Girolamo Savonarola, a monk from Ferrara who became prior of the monastery of San Marco in 1482 (see fig. 9.6). There is, however, no evidence that Botticelli, unlike his younger brother Simone, ever became a partisan of the political movement that Savonarola set in motion. In his sermons in the Duomo, the only building in Florence large enough to hold his audiences, Savonarola denounced the sins of Florence and the worldliness of the Renaissance with such force that listeners wept openly. The adherents of the Dominican preacher (known as *piagnoni* or "weepers," from *piangere*, "to weep") mobilized popular resentment against the Medici's supporters, the *palleschi*.

The "art of dying" had become a common theme in devotional literature starting in the later fourteenth century. Of Savonarola's two sermons on this subject one is lost, but a second, preached on November 2, 1496, was published before the end of the year in a pamphlet entitled *Sermon on the Art of Dying Well*. The pamphlet, including four woodcut illustrations, is an early example of a mass-produced illustrated work. In the woodcut showing a man who has waited until the last minute to repent (fig. 13.28), his dilemma is evident in the contrast between the angels gathered above on the one hand and, on the other, Death knocking at the door and the devil standing by the man's head. The *tondo* of the *Madonna and Child with Angels* is the kind of devotional picture that many Florentines kept in their bedrooms (see figs. 9.11, 13.21). The unknown artist hints at linear perspective but does not follow it in either the floor or ceiling patterns; the goal of this boldly graphic image was to exhort the reader and viewer to repent, not to admire the artistic presentation.

Savonarola's understanding of the power of images is clear in the "bonfires of the vanities" led by his followers, who exhorted Florentines to burn publicly their secular books and paintings, elegant clothing, and false hairpieces. The friar's sermon encouraged his listeners to commission pictures of death and dying that they could contemplate in private. Although no surviving paintings can be related to this exhortation, perhaps the illustrations in the pamphlet were used in this way. Savonarola's prophecies of the destruction to be visited on Florence seemed to come true when the armies of King Charles VIII of France entered the city in 1494, after the expulsion of Lorenzo the Magnificent's son, Piero the Unlucky. The peace that had reigned

**13.27. SANDRO BOTTICELLI.** *Annunciation.* 1489–90. Panel, 59 × 61¾" (1.5 × 1.56 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Benedetto di Ser Francesco Guardi del Cane for Sta. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, Florence. The frame, with the small painting of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, is original.



*Left:* 13.28. Woodcut illustration from Girolamo Savonarola's *Predica dell'arte del bene morire* (*Sermon on the Art of Dying Well*), published in Florence by Bartolommeo di Libri. 1496, with later editions in 1497 and c. 1505. Woodcut in 18-page pamphlet, size of pamphlet 8 × 5⅛" (20.3 × 12.9 cm).

The text related to this image reads: "A man [lies] sick in bed who has waited until the last moment to do penance, but at that point few save themselves…. His wife and relatives gather around him and persuade him that he is not going to die, and everyone says, 'Don't frighten him, tell him he's going to recover, sick people shouldn't be discouraged'! …. [Also] the devil makes him desperate at that moment, arguing that he has committed so many iniquities that it is not reasonable that God would want to save him."
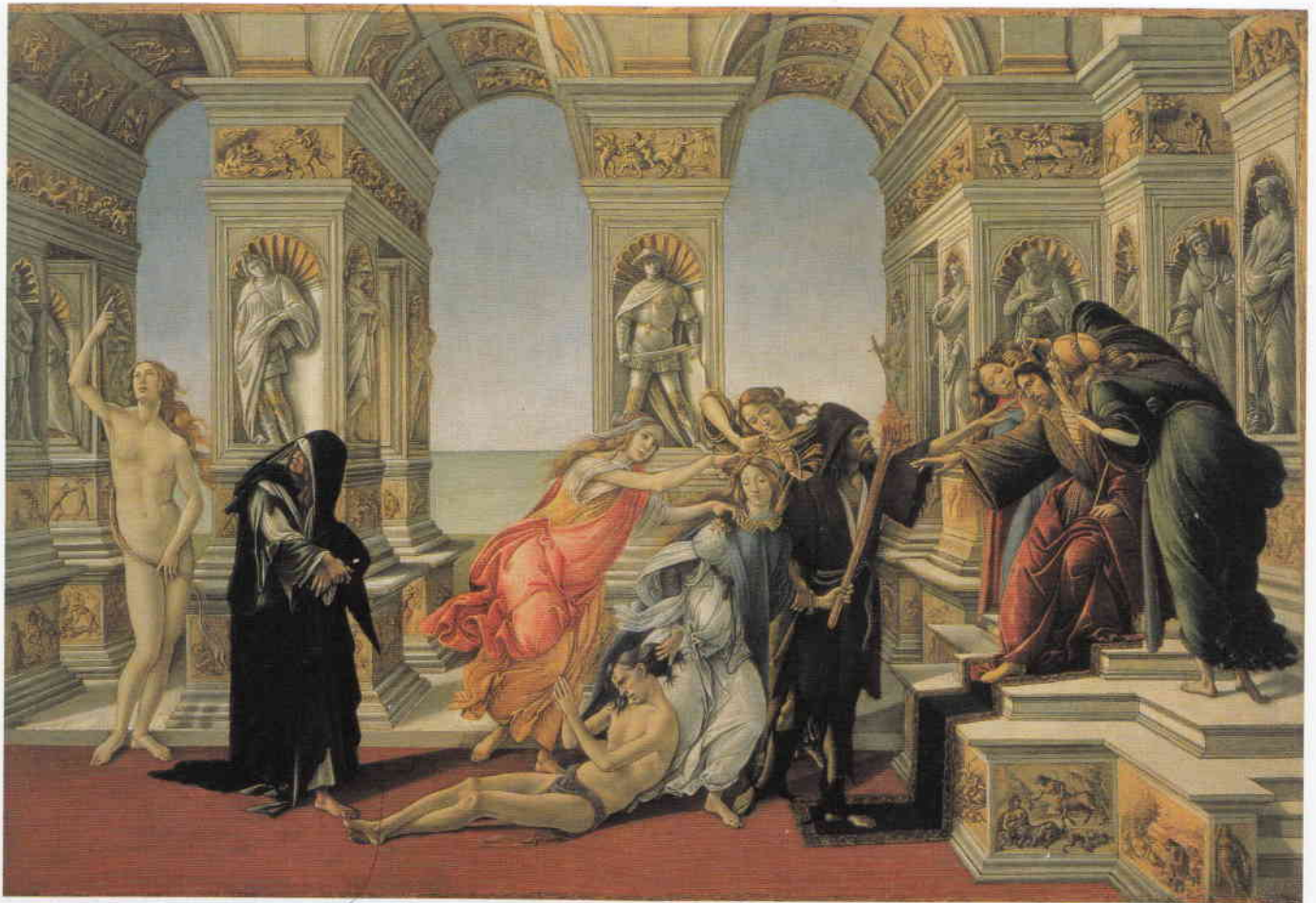
13.29. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Calumny of Apelles.* 1497–98(?). Panel, 24⅝ × 36" (62 × 91 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence.
The iconography of Apelles' lost painting was known to Renaissance humanists through a description by the ancient author Lucian. It has been suggested that Botticelli created this work without a commission, for his own satisfaction. If this was the case, a major question would be whether Botticelli's main intent was to re-create an ancient work or to comment on the death of Savonarola.

with few interruptions in central and northern Italy for forty years was over, and it became evident that the Italian states could not stave off domination by the centralized monarchies of France and Spain, not to mention the Holy Roman Empire. Eventually, Savonarola took over the government of the republic, but problems in Florence and his attacks on Pope Alexander VI turned both the Florentines and the papacy against him. In 1498 he was tortured until he admitted the charges of heresy leveled against him. He and two of his assistants were hanged in front of the Palazzo dei Priori and their bodies burned; the ashes were thrown in the Arno.

Botticelli's apparent moralistic fervor during this period is illustrated by a painting of a difficult subject known as the *Calumny of Apelles* (fig. 13.29) because it attempts to re-create a lost painting on the theme of slander (calumny) by the ancient Greek painter Apelles, known in the Renaissance only from a description. Whether Botticelli's painting has any connection with Savonarola is uncertain, and

who the humanistically minded patron may have been is also unknown. It was Alberti who suggested that artists attempt to re-create this painting. Standing beside the throne of the unjust judge Midas are allegorical figures of Ignorance and Suspicion, who lift Midas' donkey ears to whisper their advice. Slander, led by the hooded, bearded Hatred, and attended by Deceit and Fraud, who is adjusting her jewels, drags forward a nearly naked youth to face Midas' judgment. Penitence, an old woman, looks away from the main scene toward the nude figure of Truth, who points upward, to heaven.

The oppressive effect of the *Calumny* is in part produced by its illogical space. Most of the perspective lines vanish behind the head of Fraud, but the two barrel vaults in the center recess toward a lower point. The composition is further complicated by the throne at the right, which creates an axis of interest in conflict with the visual axis of the perspective. Sculptural friezes representing classical subjects dwarf the piers, which are pierced by transverse

passages and decorated with niches. From these niches protrude statues—a Judith with the head of Holofernes at the extreme right, for example, and, at the center, a warrior in the pose of Castagno's *Pippo Spano* (see fig. 11.14). More reliefs adorn the bases of the piers, and even the coffers of the vault are filled with reliefs.

Within this active architecture, the figural composition is rendered in Botticelli's characteristic linear style. Echoes of earlier graceful figures occur here and there. Truth is an obvious reference to the *Birth of Venus* (see fig. 13.24). But the dreamlike quality of Botticelli's painted mythologies has turned into a kind of nightmare. It has been proposed that the picture was intended to defend the memory of Savonarola by suggesting that his accusers were wicked and his judge weak—a suggestion rendered plausible by the tattered Dominican habit in which Penitence is dressed.

The crowded, dramatic style of the *Calumny* reappears in contemporary religious works by Botticelli, such as the painting of 1500 now known as the *Mystic Nativity*. On the basis of the cryptic inscription across the top (see caption to fig. 13.30), it has been suggested that this work was painted for the artist's personal satisfaction. The picture has been difficult to interpret despite this text. While a few elements are drawn from Chapters 11 and 12 of the Book of Revelation, some of the figures are not, and there are specific references to sermons by Savonarola. The inscription's reference to the second woe of the Apocalypse, which describes the fiery prophecies of two "witnesses" and their death at the hands of the Antichrist, almost surely refers to the deaths of Savonarola and his principal follower, Fra Domenico da Pescia. The "half time after the time" can only refer to the year 1500, the half millennium after the millennium of the Nativity of Christ.

The "trouble in Italy," to which the inscription refers, is not hard to identify, considering that the armies of Cesare Borgia were then loose in Tuscany. Botticelli suggests that after this passes we will be brought to the place where the mystic woman of Revelation 12 has found refuge with her child in the wilderness; then all devils will be chained under the rocks (we see this in the lowest foreground), angels will embrace us, and we may dwell in safety. Angels with olive branches draw shepherds forward to adore the Christ Child. In the heavens above, angels dance in a ring and crowns swing from olive branches. The embrace of peace, the circling patterns, the sheltering wood, and the protecting mother offer an atmosphere of calm missing in most of Botticelli's later pictures. Even the color is transformed: the jewel-like blues, yellows, and reds are a release from the harsh tones that characterized the immediately preceding period of Botticelli's art.

During the last ten years of his life, Botticelli seems to have painted little. Although he was consulted along with other artists about the placing of Michelangelo's *David* in 1504, the Florence of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the young Raphael may have offered little or no opportunities of work for him. Commissions went to artists who could emulate the new style of the High Renaissance. Vasari, who would have us believe that Botticelli's patronage declined when he was under the influence of Savonarola, wrote that Botticelli became prematurely old and walked with two canes.



13.30. SANDRO BOTTICELLI. *Mystic Nativity*. 1500. Canvas, 42¼ × 29½" (108.6 × 74.9 cm). National Gallery, London.
At the top of the painting is this inscription, in Greek: "This picture I, Alessandro, painted at the end of the year 1500, during the trouble in Italy in the half time after the time which was prophesied in the eleventh [chapter] of John and the second woe of the Apocalypse when the Devil was loosed upon the earth for three years and a half. Afterward he shall be put in chains according to the twelfth woe, and we shall see [word missing] as in this picture." The missing word may be "heaven."

13.31. FILIPPINO LIPPI. *Vision of St. Bernard*. c. 1485–90. Panel, 6'10" × 6'5" (2.08 × 1.96 m). Church of the Badia, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco del Pugliese, a wealthy cloth merchant, for the monastic church of Le Campora at Marignolle, near Florence. The frame is original.

## Filippino Lippi

The fourth important Florentine painter of the end of the Quattrocento, Filippino Lippi (1457/58–1504), received his early training from his father, Fra Filippo Lippi, accompanied him to Spoleto in 1466, and remained there until Fra Filippo's death in 1469. Filippino's association with Botticelli lasted for a number of years, perhaps until the latter was called to Rome in 1481. In 1484 Filippino was asked to complete the frescoes by Masaccio and Masolino in the Brancacci Chapel (see figs. 8.7, 8.16) and, while his figures can be distinguished from those of the earlier artists, he based his compositions on theirs. The effect is a surprisingly unified chapel given the delay in its completion.

Filippino's style is demonstrated in the *Vision of St. Bernard* (fig. 13.31). Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* explained that one day, when Bernard was feeling so tired he could scarcely hold his pen, the blessed Virgin, about whom he had written so much, appeared to strengthen him. In later Cinquecento representations of the vision, Mary and her accompanying angels float as a heavenly apparition (see fig. 16.51). Here she stands quietly before Bernard's outdoor desk, attended by wide-eyed child-angels, as she lays a slender hand on Bernard's rumpled page. He stops writing to look up in adoration. Between Mary and the monk a Trecento manuscript stands open so that one can read St. Luke's account

of the Annunciation. Filippino must have meant us to feel that Mary came to St. Bernard as the angel Gabriel had come to her, and that in this vision the Christ Child is born a second time, as St. Antoninus would have put it, in Bernard's heart. On the hillside, monks look upward, astonished, at the golden glow through which Mary and her angels have descended. In the lower right-hand corner the donor folds his hands in prayer; a demon, gnawing his chains in defeat, can be seen in a hole in the rocks above the donor's head.

The naturalism of faces and hands, rocks and trees, even the appearance of the angels reveals the impact of an important artistic event. Florentine painters were profoundly impressed when a large altarpiece representing the *Adoration of the Shepherds* by the Netherlandish painter Hugo van der Goes (fig. 13.32) arrived in Florence, probably in 1483. It had been commissioned by Tommaso Portinari, a Florentine who worked in Flanders for the Medici. The Florentines had seen small examples of Netherlandish painting, and a tiny oil on panel painting of *St. Jerome* attributed to Jan van Eyck and Petrus Christus (now in the Detroit Institute of Arts) had belonged to Cosimo de' Medici. The Portinari altarpiece, however, offered the Florentines the detailed realism of Northern painters on a huge scale and in a public setting. This work's arrival in Florence was a revelation, and Filippino must have studied the melancholy faces of the Portinari children with care, as they are reflected in those of his angels.



13.32. HUGO VAN DER GOES. *Adoration of the Shepherds* (Portinari altarpiece). Late 1470s. Panels: center, 8'4" × 10' (2.54 × 5.86 m); laterals, each 8'4" × 4'8" (2.54 × 1.42 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Tommaso Portinari for Sant'Egidio, Florence, where it was placed on the high altar.

13.33. FILIPPINO LIPPI. Fresco cycle of the legends of St. Philip and St. John the Evangelist. 1487–1502. Strozzi Chapel, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. Commissioned by Filippo Strozzi.

The tomb of Filippo Strozzi behind the altar is by Benedetto da Maiano. The tomb is placed so that it seems to lie underneath the altar table, while the Madonna and Child sculpture that surmounts the tomb becomes a sculpted altarpiece for the chapel itself. The funereal symbolism is continued in the fresco above the tomb, which features angels holding skulls and a shelf with a row of skulls. Filippino's frescoes on the back wall illusionistically suggest sculpture, thus integrating the marble tomb sculptures into the total decoration of the chapel. Filippino also designed the stained glass, which features the Madonna and Child above (as a reference to the patron of the church) and, below, Sts. Philip and John the Evangelist, to whom the chapel is dedicated. Notice how the decorative motifs in the framing of the window match those in the frescoes. The figures in the vault are from the Old Testament.

In Filippino's frescoes of the legends of saints Philip and John the Evangelist, this antimonumental style comes to its climax (fig. 13.33). The frescoes for the Strozzi Chapel were commissioned in 1487 by Filippo Strozzi, builder of the Palazzo Strozzi (see fig. 12.17). He interrupted work on the chapel when he gave Filippino permission to go to Rome for an important commission in Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Strozzi died in 1494 without seeing the frescoes, which were not completed until 1502. The chapel was a Gothic construction, and Filippino transformed it with elaborate painted frames featuring details borrowed from motifs in Rome's Golden House of the Emperor Nero. Since these decorations were found in what seemed to be a grotto, they became known as *grotteschi*—the origin of our word "grotesque." They consist of lamps, urns, consoles, masks, harpies, lions' feet, and other decorative elements that can be combined vertically on pilasters or woven into fantastic webs covering walls or vaults. Filippino's decoration is one of the first examples of *grotteschi* in Florence.

*St. Philip Exorcising the Demon in the Temple of Mars* (fig. 13.34) is one of the most unexpected pictures of the
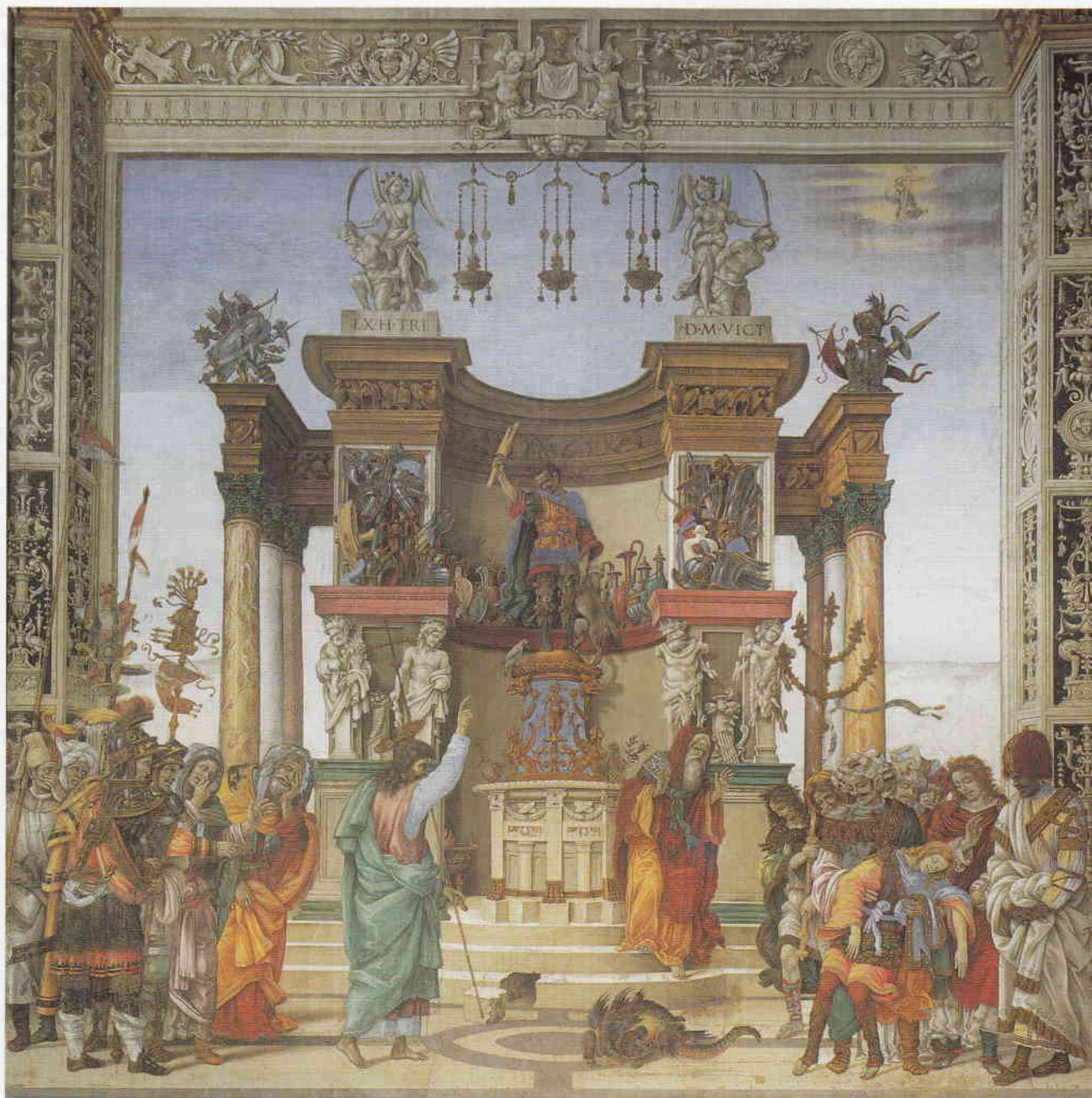


13.34. FILIPPINO LIPPI. *St. Philip Exorcising the Demon in the Temple of Mars.* 1487–1502. Fresco. Strozzi Chapel, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence.

Florentine Renaissance. Apocryphal sources relate that when St. Philip entered the Temple of Mars in Hierapolis, in Asia Minor, a demon in the shape of a dragon burst from the base of the statue of the god and emitted such poisonous fumes that the king's son fell dead. St. Philip's exorcism of the dragon greatly displeased the priest of Mars and led to the saint's crucifixion, which Filippino represents in the fresco above this one. At the upper right-hand corner of the scene of exorcism, so small that one hardly notices him, Christ appears in an opening in the clouds, carrying his cross and offering his blessing.

The pagan altar is a huge exedra that encloses a statue of Mars, while below, to either side, herms, supposedly marble sculptures, twist as if alive. The ledges above are crowded with trophies—offerings from devotees—and, behind Mars, amphorae of various sizes and shapes. On the cornice, statues of kneeling, bound captives below winged Victories seem to mesh with the painted lamps that hang into the scene on chains from the mouths of three *putti*. The illusion becomes even more contradictory through Filippino's suggestion that some figures are standing in front of the frame at the sides; Filippino and Botticelli were classified as experts of perspective by Fra Luca Pacioli in 1494, but here Filippino demonstrates how a late Quattrocento artist could manipulate the hard-won perspective space of the earlier decades for his own experimentation. While the complex framing elements invented by Filippino are restrained in color, the exotic nature of the altar of Mars is suggested by its bronze entablature, columns of varied marbles, green and gold capitals, and pink cornices.

Mars, looking more like a living person than a statue, brandishes a shattered lance with one hand, while with the other he caresses what is supposedly a wolf, however much it may look like a hyena. The priest cringes in terror at the power of St. Philip. On either side stand priests, courtiers, and soldiers wearing exotic costumes apparently meant to suggest the Near East. The unity of body and pose that was mastered by earlier artists such as Donatello and Masaccio is understood by Filippino but is not an important part of his style. Instead he wraps his figures in voluminous and complex robes that enliven the composition and add to the expressive power of his narrative. Despite differences of costume, age, hair, beard, and skin color, the faces are essentially the same; individuality was less important here than evoking the nausea caused by the deadly fumes.

Filippino died in 1504 at the age of forty-six, only three months after having submitted his judgment on the placing of Michelangelo's *David* (see fig. 16.1). We are told that all the *botteghe* of Via dei Servi closed in respect as his body was carried from the church of San Michele Visdomini to its final resting place in Santissima Annunziata.

# Domenico del Ghirlandaio

Although the career of Domenico del Ghirlandaio (1449–1494) was even briefer than that of Filippino, his art might be considered a culmination of the Florentine Quattrocento interest in the presentation of naturalistic effects and realistic details. Domenico, together with his brother Davide, their brother-in-law Bastiano Mainardi, and an army of assistants, was awarded many major commissions for public painting in Florence—frescoes and altarpieces—and a number of portrait commissions as well. Like Agnolo Gaddi at the end of the Trecento (see fig. 5.11) and Giorgio Vasari in the third quarter of the Cinquecento (see figs. 20.40–20.43), Ghirlandaio and his school represented the accepted taste of the period. The scientific pursuits of Pollaiuolo and Verrocchio might appeal to Lorenzo the Magnificent, the arcane researches of Botticelli to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco and his friends, but the ordinary Florentine businessman knew what he liked and may even have been irritated by so much fierce knowledge on the one hand and so much wild imagination on the other. Ghirlandaio's prosaic style suited the successful merchant perfectly.

The fate of Ghirlandaio's reputation is instructive. When Quattrocento art was rediscovered by nineteenth-century critics, Ghirlandaio's meticulous view of life about him impressed a generation that never quite understood Masaccio and were little interested in the art of Uccello and Piero della Francesca. Then, in the wake of Symbolist and Art Nouveau emphasis on emotive form in the late nineteenth century—which gave rise to the abstract forms and perspectives of the early twentieth century—Ghirlandaio fell from grace a second time.

Gradually, however, his merits have become appreciated again. His art shows at least three important qualities: he had the freshest and most consistent color sense of any Florentine painter of his day; he was familiar with the achievements of contemporary architecture and was thus able to compose figures and architectural spaces in a complex unity; and his rendering of human beings reveals his interest in representing character. How future historians view Ghirlandaio's contributions remains to be seen, but the vicissitudes in his reputation are typical of the manner in which different periods view the art and artists of the past.

Born Domenico Bigordi, the son of a dealer in the golden garlands worn by wealthy women, the painter acquired his father's nickname, Ghirlandaio ("garland maker"). He was trained as a metalworker, and it is not certain how or when he turned to painting. He was soon so popular that he could not work fast enough to satisfy the demand for his works. His *Last Supper* for the

refectory of the monastery of Ognissanti (fig. 13.35) was dependent on Castagno—probably not the work at Sant' Apollonia (see fig. 11.1), which Ghirlandaio most likely never saw, but Castagno's lost *Last Supper* for Santa Maria Nuova. Ghirlandaio's table is situated in an upper room with a view over citron trees and cypresses and a sky with falcons and pheasants. Nowhere is there a face as intense as those in Castagno's surviving fresco, but the inner life of these apostles is clear from their reactions to Christ's announcement of the betrayal. The freshness of the color, the balance of the composition, and the naturalistic handling of the faces and drapery epitomize Ghirlandaio's style.

Ghirlandaio included contemporary Florentine citizens in his frescoes for the Sassetti Chapel in Santa Trinita in Florence, dedicated by the wealthy banker Francesco Sassetti to the legend of his patron, St. Francis. In the *Resurrection of the Notary's Son* (the central scene in the full view of the chapel, fig. 13.1), Sassetti's five daughters with their spouses can be seen to the left. The figure to the far right is Ghirlandaio himself; next to him is probably his brother Davide. In the background, the boy who is the subject of the miracle falls from the window of a large palace; in the center, Francis blesses the child, who sits upright on his bier. The clarity of the narrative is reminiscent of the simple ex-voto scenes still painted today for Italian village churches to record the miraculous intervention of saints in the lives of the faithful. The choice of this unusual scene may be related to the death of Teodoro, the son of Francesco Sassetti and his wife, Nora Corsi Sassetti, in 1478 or 1479; shortly thereafter, Nora Sassetti gave birth to a son who, in memory of his deceased brother, was also named Teodoro.

Ghirlandaio set his scene in the Piazza Santa Trinita, right outside the church where the chapel is situated. On the left rises the Palazzo Spini, on the right the Romanesque façade of Santa Trinita (to be replaced in the late Cinquecento), and in the distance is the old Ponte Santa Trinita, lined with houses (replaced, after the flood of 1555, with a monumental new bridge; see fig. 20.27).

In the *Confirmation of the Franciscan Rule* (fig. 13.36), Ghirlandaio's determination to paint Florence into his



13.35. DOMENICO DEL GHIRLANDAIO. *Last Supper.* 1480. Fresco, 13 × 26'6" (4 × 8.1 m). Refectory, Ognissanti, Florence. The face of Christ was repainted on a new patch of plaster by Carlo Dolci in the seventeenth century.

backgrounds is even more obvious. The scene of the pope's approval of the order, which took place in Rome, is eclipsed in the foreground by a grouping of Florentines and in the back by a view of Florence's most important public square, the Piazza della Signoria (see fig. 2.40). The four portraits to the right are Antonio Pucci, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and Francesco and Federigo Sassetti. Coming up the steps in the foreground is the humanist Poliziano, followed by Lorenzo's sons: Giuliano is beside Poliziano, with Piero and Giovanni behind. We can still make out a nail hole in the middle of the central opening of the background loggia. This is where Ghirlandaio's *bottega* attached the nail that held the string used to mark the orthogonals of the perspective scheme and to create some of the semicircular arches of the setting. Ghirlandaio's use of a Florentine setting for this Roman scene has been related to the idea that republican Florence represented the idea of a "new Rome."

In the chapel's altarpiece, the *Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds* (fig. 13.37), the Virgin adores the Christ Child, who rests on a bundle of hay. Corinthian piers, one bearing the date 1485, support the roof of the shed. The ox and ass look earnestly out and down over the manger, here a Roman sarcophagus, its inscription recording a divine promise of resurrection for the former occupant. The Roman triumphal arch in the background bears an inscription of Pompey the Great. The train of the magi passes through the triumphal arch and moves toward the foreground. The realism of the ox, ass, Mary, and above all the three shepherds shows Ghirlandaio's study of Van der Goes's Portinari altarpiece (see fig. 13.32). Ghirlandaio must have admired this work for the completeness with which the tiniest detail was rendered. Following Van der Goes, he incorporates a vase of flowers into his foreground, complete with the Florentine iris. But although the types and poses of his shepherds come straight out of the Portinari altarpiece, the differences between the two works are instructive: for all his absorption in Netherlandish detail, Ghirlandaio was a Florentine, and he assimilated the detail into the overall
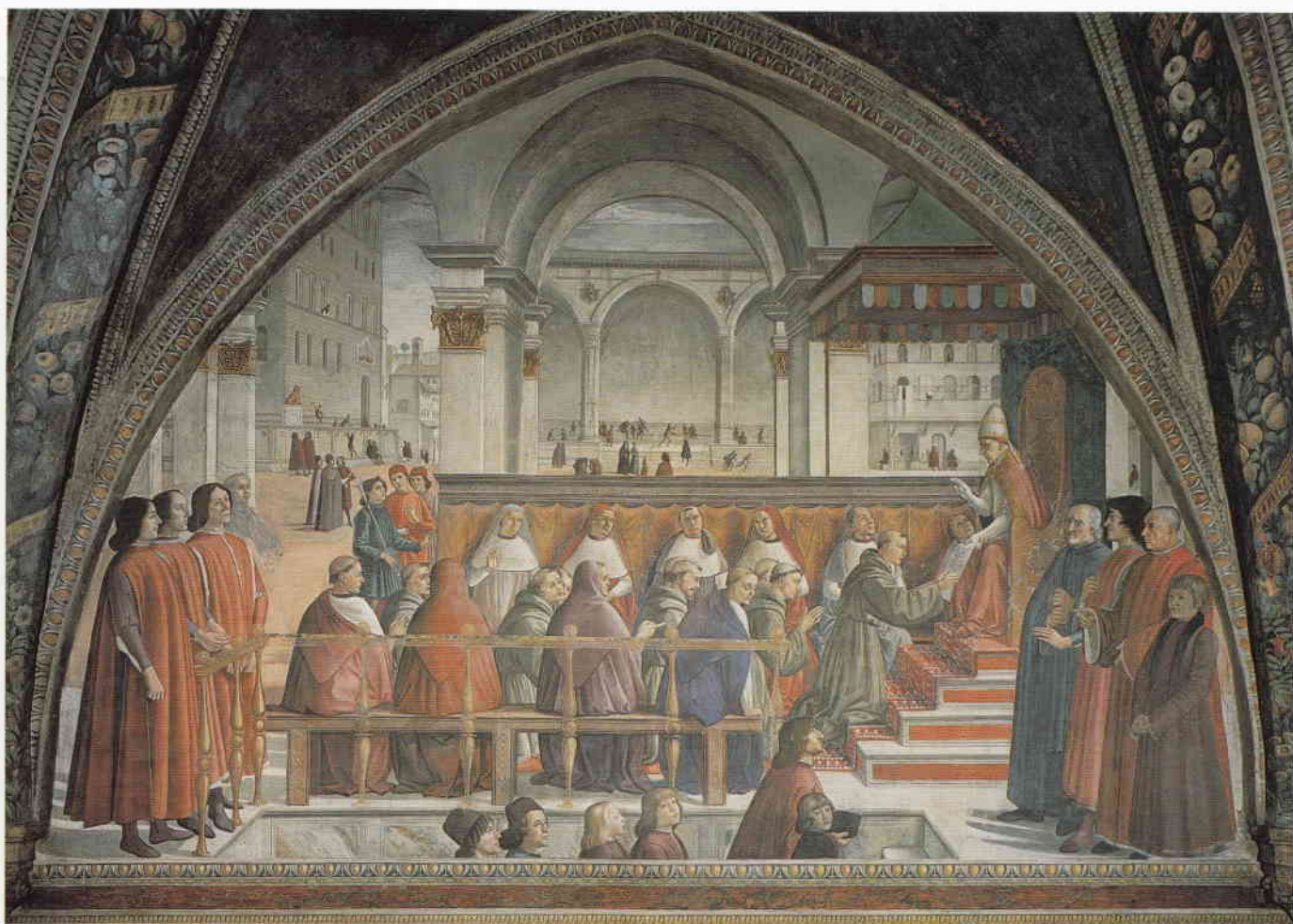


13.36. DOMENICO DEL GHIRLANDAIO. *Confirmation of the Franciscan Rule by Pope Honorius III.* 1483–86. Fresco, width at base 17'2" (5.25 m). Sassetti Chapel, Sta. Trinita, Florence. See also fig. 13.1.
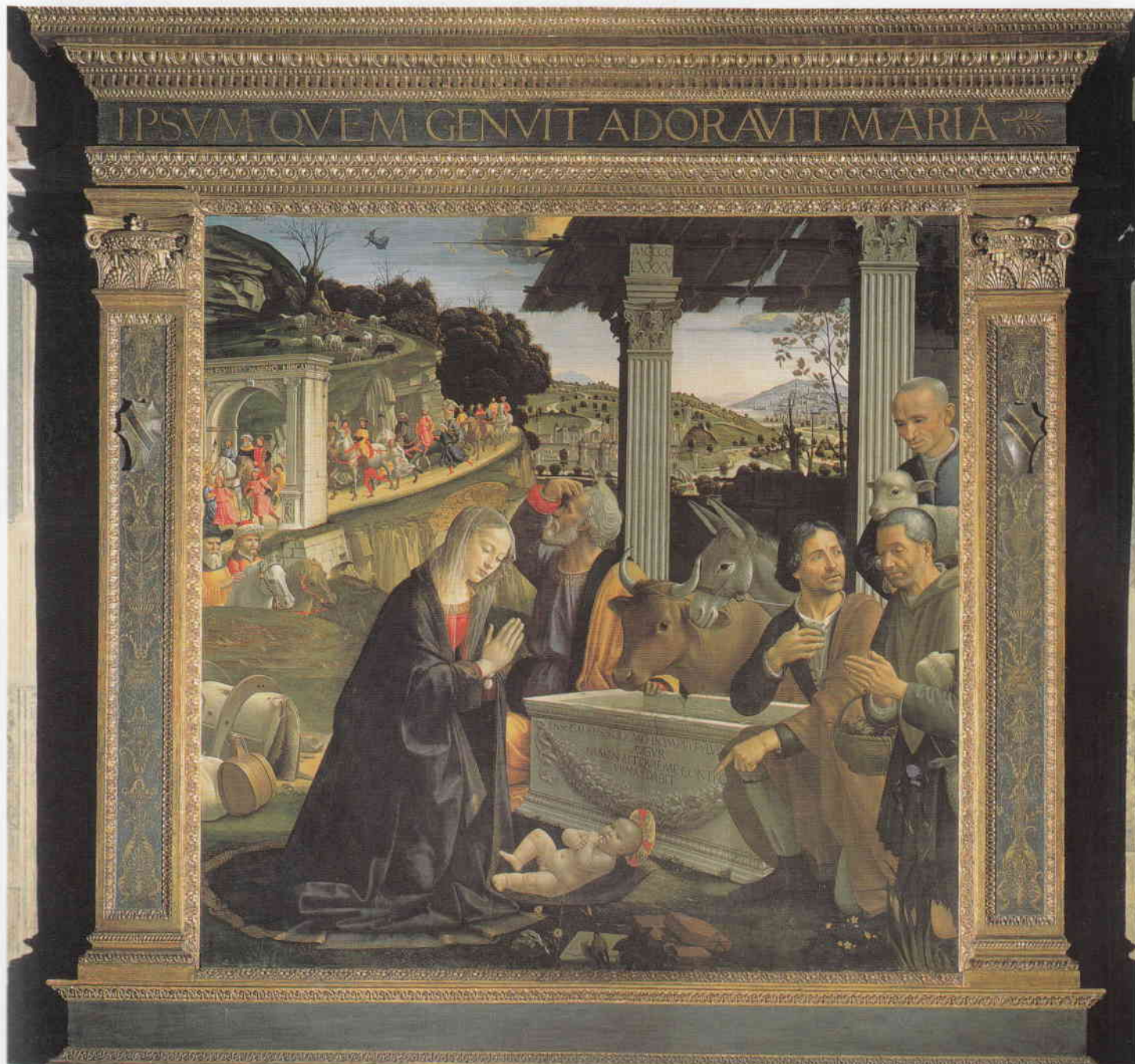
**13.37. DOMENICO DEL GHIRLANDAIO.** *Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds.* 1485. Panel, 65³/₄" (1.67 m) square. 🏛 Sassetti Chapel, Sta. Trinita, Florence. See also fig. 3.1.

The frame is original; the *grotteschi* decoration on the pilasters was inspired by the ancient Roman frescoes that had recently been discovered in the Golden House of Nero in Rome. When Ghirlandaio visited the archaeological site he carved his initials onto one of the ancient walls.

monumentality and compositional harmony of an Italian Renaissance altarpiece.

One of Ghirlandaio's major commissions was the series of almost twenty frescoes of the lives of Mary and John the Baptist that fills the Gothic chancel of Santa Maria Novella (fig 13.38; see fig. 2.34). The patron was the wealthy Giovanni Tornabuoni, a relative by marriage of the Medici, and Ghirlandaio was under such pressure that he enlisted his whole shop in the undertaking, including possibly a thirteen-year-old apprentice named Michelangelo Buonarroti. The compositions are framed by a decorative Renaissance architecture closely connected, like that in the Sassetti Chapel, with the ideas of the architect Giuliano da Sangallo (see figs. 12.21–12.23) and full of elaborate detail.
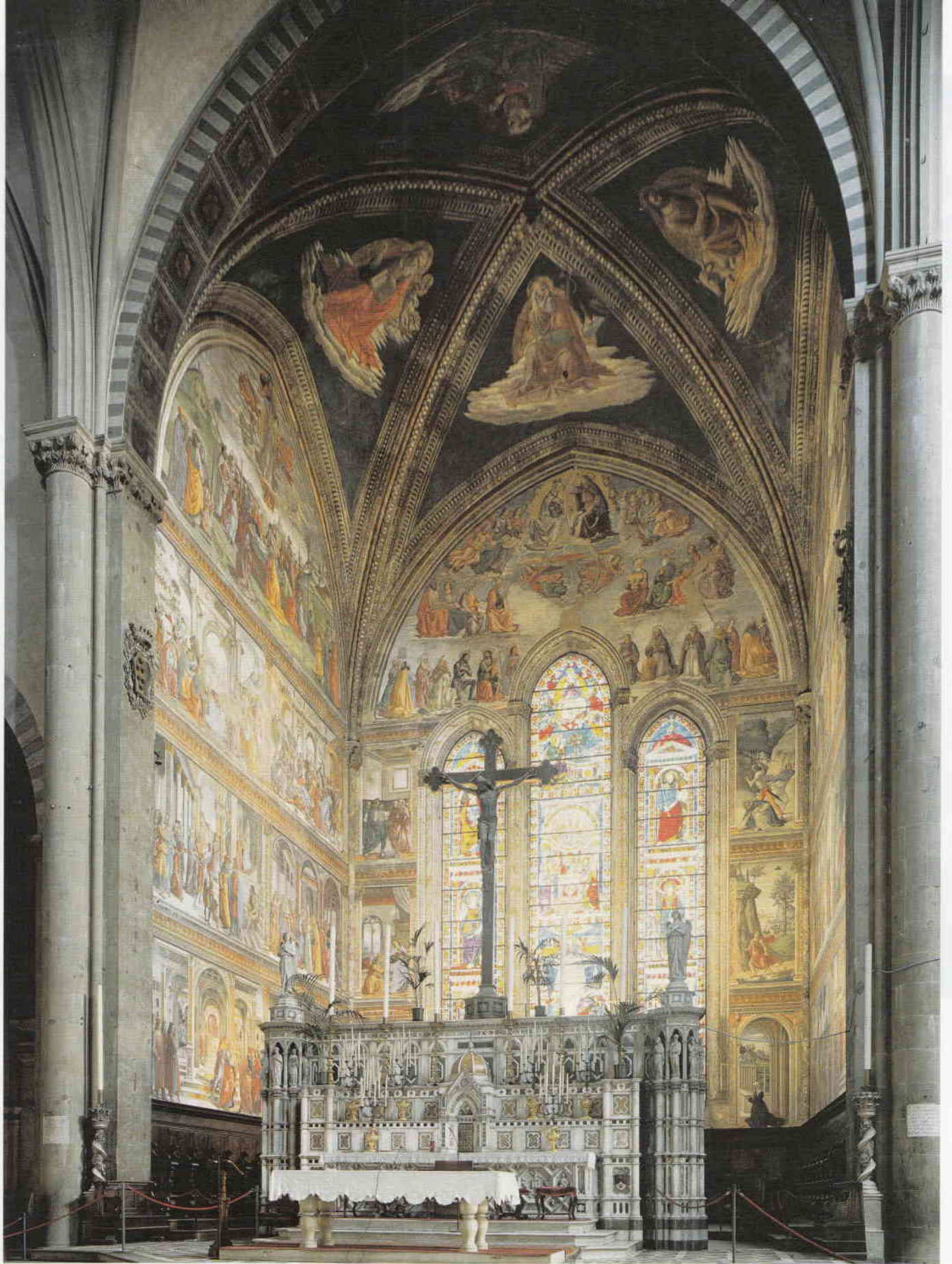
13.38. DOMENICO DEL GHIRLANDAIO. Fresco cycle of the lives of Mary and John the Baptist, 1485–90. Tornabuoni Chapel (Cappella Maggiore), Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. Commissioned by Giovanni Tornabuoni. Ghirlandaio also designed the stained glass. The altarpiece has been removed and is now in the Alte Pinacoteca in Munich, to be replaced by the marble construction seen here.
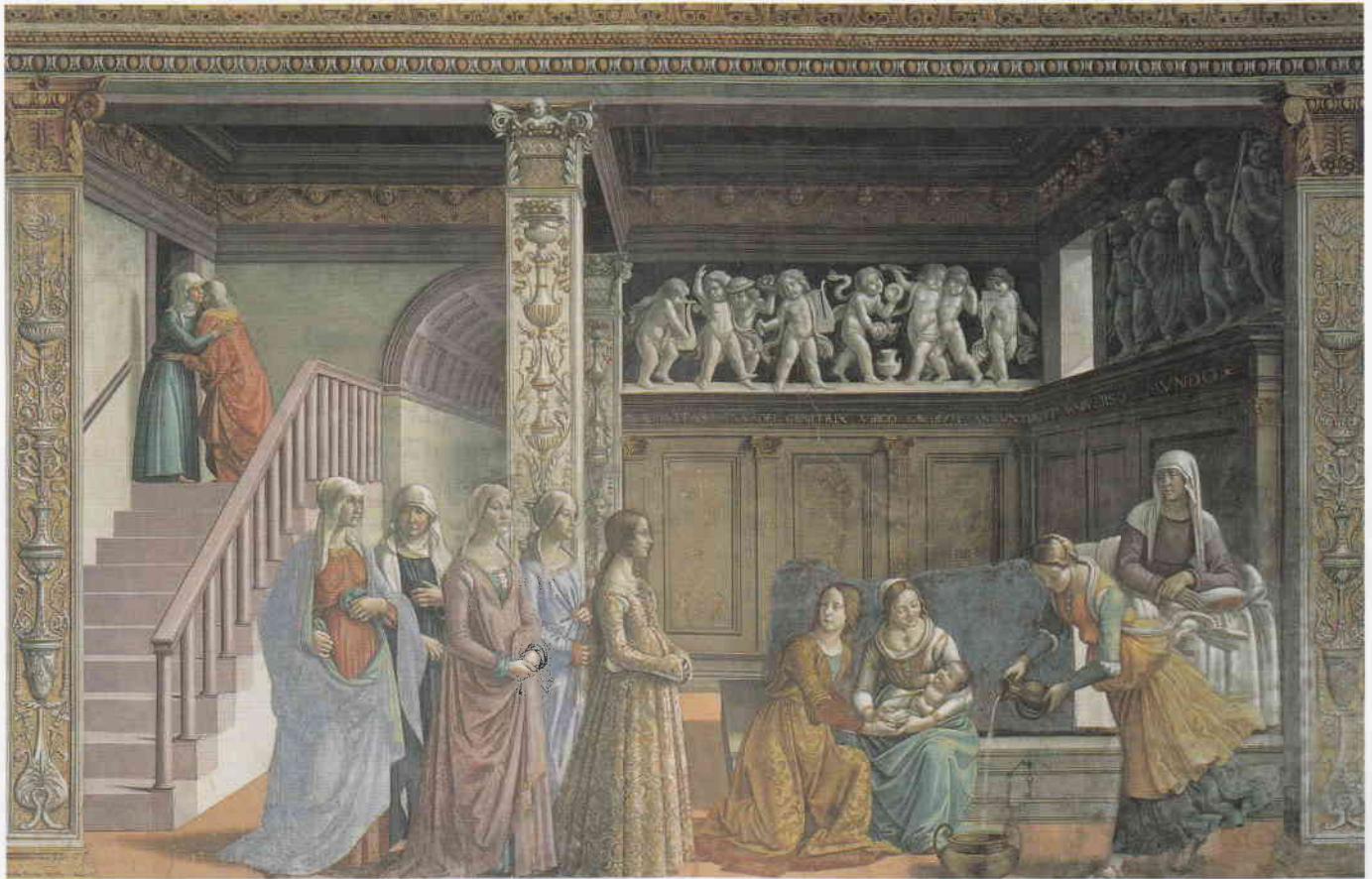
13.39. DOMENICO DEL GHIRLANDAIO. *Birth of the Virgin*. 1485–90. Fresco, width approximately 14'9" (4.5 m). Cappella Maggiore, Sta. Maria Novella, Florence. See also fig. 13.38.

The *Birth of the Virgin* (fig. 13.39) takes place in an interior in Giuliano's style. Anne reclines on a bed surrounded by paneling inlaid with ancient Roman designs, within which one can read both Ghirlandaio's family name and his nickname. The child is held by attendants; another pours water for her bath. Giovanni Tornabuoni's daughter Ludovica, standing dispassionately nearby with attendants, is dressed in a level of splendor that surely violated Florentine sumptuary laws. The details, including the frieze of *putti*, are painted with Ghirlandaio's precision of observation and perspective consistency.

Our farewell to Ghirlandaio might best be made with his incisive portrait of an old man with a child, possibly his grandson (fig. 13.40). The sitters have never been identified. A drawing by Ghirlandaio showing the old man on his deathbed reveals that the painting served as a commemoration. All the best qualities of Ghirlandaio's art
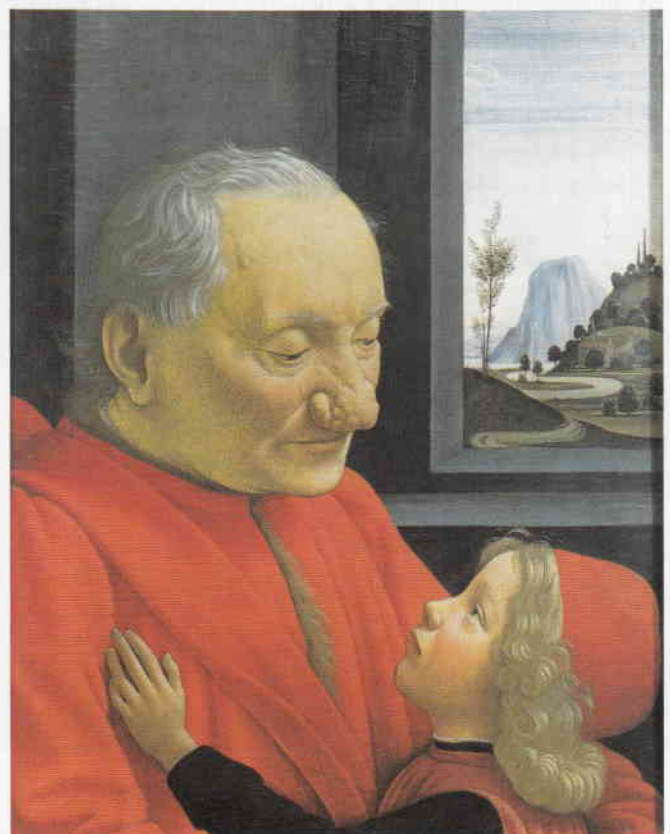


13.40. DOMENICO DEL GHIRLANDAIO. *Old Man with a Young Boy*. c. 1490. Panel, 24³⁄₈ × 18¹⁄₈" (62.7 × 46.3 cm). The Louvre, Paris. The disease that disfigured the old man's nose is rhinophyma.

appear here: the inner gentleness of expression, the delicate light on the smooth surfaces, the brilliance of the color, the beauty of the landscape, the straightforward composition, and the honesty of detail, studied with such respect that the old man's deformity loses its ugliness.

# Piero di Cosimo

Although Piero di Cosimo (1462–1522) lived well into the sixteenth century, he is included at this point because his works are largely a reflection of Quattrocento concerns. Vasari, who loved a good story, tells us that Piero hated thunderstorms and fire, the latter to such an extent that he was afraid to cook, and that he lived on hard-boiled eggs, preparing fifty at a time. He also never allowed anyone to prune his fruit trees or weed his flowers. Piero's works are exceptional, especially in their interest in wild landscape, but whether the artist was the character described by Vasari is uncertain.

In a haunting painting by Piero (fig. 13.41), a young woman is shown with an asp coiled around her neck. The immediate association is with Cleopatra, which is the identification Vasari gave to this painting, but the inscription identifies her as Simonetta Vespucci, the wife of Marco Vespucci, cousin of the explorer Amerigo Vespucci. The net of pearls that adorns her hair helps to confirm the identification, as it is a *vespaio*, a "wasp's nest," and clearly a play on her husband's name. Simonetta became, according to contemporary records, the platonic mistress (a construct of the period based on Petrarchan love sonnets) of Giuliano de' Medici, and a great joust was held in her honor in Florence in 1475. A year later, the twenty-three-year-old Simonetta died of tuberculosis, which explains the storm clouds and the threatening asp shown here. Her memory was celebrated by numerous poems and by a public funeral, in which her body was displayed in an open coffin so that her beauty could be appreciated.

Scholars have disagreed over the identification and interpretation of the picture, arguing that it seems unlikely that a fifteenth-century Florentine woman would have been immortalized in a bare-breasted portrait. While this is true of a living woman, this is a posthumous image and can best be interpreted as a commemoration of a beautiful woman who died too young. The portrait may have had a cover in Piero di Cosimo's *Allegory of Chastity Triumphing over Lust* (not illustrated), which is approximately the same size. For a Quattrocento spectator, such a cover would have muted the surprising nature of the image by establishing that Simonetta's virtue was the subject of the painting.

A mythological scene by Piero (fig. 13.42) is now held to represent the death of Procris, daughter of Erectheus, king of Athens. According to Ovid, Procris was pierced in the chest by a javelin thrown by her husband, Cephalus, who mistook her for an animal concealed in the forest. Procris, here wounded in the throat, is mourned by a satyr, whose grief is as touchingly represented as is the wordless sympathy of the dog. Piero must have felt a deep kinship with animals. The landscape setting has been designed to emphasize the main subject, the flowers bending toward the center, and the sloping shores of the harbor reflecting the position of the nymph's body. Some of the effect of softness in the sky was achieved by Piero blending his thick oil paint with his fingertips.

It may have been Francesco del Pugliese, the wealthy cloth merchant who had commissioned Filippino Lippi's *Vision of St. Bernard* (see fig. 13.31), who asked Piero to paint a pair of *spalliere* representing the early history of humanity inspired by Lucretius' ancient Roman text *De rerum natura* (*Concerning the Nature of Things*). One panel (fig. 13.43) depicts a battle among humans,



13.41. PIERO DI COSIMO. *Fantasy Portrait of Simonetta Vespucci as Cleopatra (?).* Early 1480s. Panel, 22½ × 16½" (57 × 42 cm). Musée Condé, Chantilly.

animals, and such half-human creatures as centaurs and satyrs. The forest setting is typically unpruned and fire breaks out here and there in wild gusts that seem to be brushed on quickly with bold brushstrokes. Piero's imagination enabled him to create a vision of the terrors, traumas, and troubles of prehistoric humanity, and he pulls us into this world through a combination of distant landscape and foreshortened figures: a dead dog at the far left, a horse to the right of center, and a rotting corpse in the right foreground. It is hard not to be both fascinated and horrified by the brutish behavior Piero assigned to our ancestors. How this evolutionistic view of mankind was reconciled with the account in Genesis we can only guess.

The artists discussed here, together with innumerable imitators, bring to its close a century of great artistic fertility. As we will see, the art and architecture of the new century moved in a sharply different direction.



*Above:* 13.42. PIERO DI COSIMO. *Death of Procris.* c. 1495–1510. Panel, $25^3/4 \times 72^1/4$" (65.4 × 184.2 cm). National Gallery, London. Like Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* (see fig. 13.22), this was probably a *spalliera* panel.



13.43. PIERO DI COSIMO. *Hunting Scene.* c. 1485–1500. Panel, $27^3/4 \times 5'6^3/4$" (70 × 169.5 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Gift of Robert Gordon, 1875). Probably commissioned by Francesco del Pugliese, perhaps in connection with his marriage in 1485.

# THE RENAISSANCE IN
# CENTRAL ITALY

While artists working throughout much of the Italian peninsula felt the impact of Florentine artistic innovations, their patrons often had little interest in the civic ideals expressed in the works created in Florence. The problems faced by most central Italian towns, for example, had little in common with the civic responsibilities considered important by the Florentines. If these states escaped absorption by Florence, whose territorial ambitions were aimed largely at protecting the Arno Valley, they fell under the control of other powers, especially, during the second half of the century, the papacy. In some centers the old communal form of government lingered on, however, and certain sovereigns, such as the counts (later dukes) of Urbino and the lords of Rimini, maintained their independence. A number of local schools of art flourished in southern Tuscany and in the regions now known as Umbria, Latium, and the Marches. The most important developed in the most populous centers: Siena and Perugia.

## Siena

By the early Quattrocento the bonds that had once linked Siena with Florence had almost dissolved. In 1399 Siena submitted to the temporary overlordship of Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan, who thereby outflanked Florence from the south (see p. 160). While Florence emphasized papist Guelph allegiances, Siena supported the Holy Roman Empire and received visits from Emperors Sigismund and Frederick III. At the end of the Quattrocento, the city was under the rule of a dictator, Pandolfo Petrucci.

In artistic terms, Siena never had a revolutionary figure like Masaccio or Brunelleschi, and the city's artists sometimes seem to have regarded perspective as a novelty. They demonstrated little interest in the Early Renaissance and less in the High Renaissance, and antiquity made only a tardy and fragmentary appearance in their art. One exception is the sculptor Jacopo della Quercia (see figs. 7.19–7.24), but he worked as much in Lucca and Bologna as in his native city.

We may wonder what Florentine artists thought of Siena when they visited. The reliefs contributed by Donatello and Ghiberti to the baptismal font in the Cathedral of Siena (see figs. 7.18–7.19) were soon imitated by Sienese artists, and when Donatello returned in the 1450s, a spark of his late style caught fire in the minds of some local sculptors. In 1458, when the Sienese humanist Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini became Pope Pius II, he called Bernardo Rossellino to Siena for architectural projects there and in the village of Corsignano, which the pope rechristened Pienza (see figs. 10.10–10.11).

There are other contacts as well, but Siena in the Quattrocento went its own way. Many patrons apparently continued to prefer Gothic pointed arches and gold backgrounds. There was a clear demand for copies of works by the leading Sienese Trecento artists or for variations on earlier works by Duccio, Simone Martini, and the Lorenzetti. The Sienese painters did, however, show a strong interest in nature. In Siena the open country began

*Opposite:* 14.1. PINTORICCHIO and RAPHAEL. *Departure of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini for Basel.* 1503–8. Fresco. 🏛 Piccolomini Library, Cathedral, Siena. Commissioned by Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini, who died in 1503, only a month after being crowned as Pope Pius III (see figs. 14.21–14.22).

14.2. SASSETTA. *St. Francis in Ecstasy*, from the back of the Sansepolcro altarpiece. 1437–44. Panel, 6'8¾" × 4' (2 × 1.2 m). Berenson Collection, Villa I Tatti, Florence (reproduced by permission of the President and Fellows of Harvard College). Commissioned by the Franciscan Community in Sansepolcro for the high altar of S. Francesco, Sansepolcro.

at the city walls, where one can still find vistas out over low ranges of hills to spacious views. Without the aid of Florentine science, Sienese painters made discoveries about landscape that were overlooked by the more systematic Florentines.

## Sassetta

Stefano di Giovanni (c. 1400–1450), who was nicknamed Sassetta ("little stone") for unknown reasons, may have come to Siena from Cortona. His double-sided Sansepolcro altarpiece, its elements now scattered, is his major work. The front showed an *Enthroned Madonna and Child* between four saints; on the back *St. Francis in Ecstasy* (fig. 14.2) was flanked by eight panels illustrating the saint's life (see fig. 14.3).

Seen in its original position in the restricted space of a monks' choir, the *St. Francis in Ecstasy* must have been compelling. Francis, extending his arms as he glides miraculously over the sea, stands upon the crowned and bearded figure of the vice Wrath, who is attended by a lion. To the left, an elegantly dressed woman leaning on a boar while looking into a mirror personifies Lust. On the right, Avarice, a shriveled old woman dressed in black and accompanied by a wolf, keeps her moneybag in a rectangular chest. Above the saint soar three dainty blonde maidens who represent the Franciscan Virtues: Chastity with her lily, Poverty dressed in rags, and—in the center—Obedience with her yoke. The inscription on Francis's halo identifies him as the patriarch of the poor.

The saint's pose and expression convey both rapture and calm. The figure is modeled in broad masses by a high light source, creating an effect of weight and supporting the notion that Sassetta may have studied the works of Masaccio. While the facial features are equally sculptural, the head is curiously constructed; following Byzantine tradition, Sassetta used the bridge of the nose as the center of the face, drawing a circle from this point to create the circles of the halo. The forehead and hair fall short, apparently to indicate that the head is tilted back. Sienese linearism reappears in the wrinkles in the saint's forehead, temples, and cheeks, which are drawn as parallel curves, moving in elliptical, parabolic, or figure-eight patterns with dizzying effect.

Around the saint blazes a mandorla composed of red seraphim with interlocked wings, a traditional Trecento device (see fig. 5.3). These have largely peeled away from the gold background, but originally they must have been striking. The representation of the distant shore with its hills and towers forces us to read the gold background as sky. We are aware of echoes of Simone Martini and the Lorenzetti, but this should not blind us to the fact that,

without applying Florentine perspective, Sassetta has established a convincing distant landscape and has set a solid, well-modeled figure within that space. These are Renaissance elements, and they place Sassetta in harmony with what was happening in Florence at the time.

In the smaller scenes, Sassetta gave free rein to his imagination and interest in space. The *Marriage of St. Francis to Lady Poverty* (fig. 14.3) shows the saint placing a ring on the finger of Poverty, who stands between Chastity and Obedience. As the three then float off for celestial regions, Poverty glances back sweetly toward her bridegroom. The curves of the Virtues harmonize with the shapes of the



14.3. SASSETTA. *Marriage of St. Francis to Lady Poverty*, from the back of the Sansepolcro altarpiece. 1437–44. Panel, 34⅝ × 20½" (88 × 52 cm). Musée Condé, Chantilly.

cusped frame. At the lower right, Sassetta makes reference to Duccio in a tiny city that might have come out of a panel of the *Maestà* (see fig. 4.9). A white road runs across the valley floor to branch into curves among distant mountain ranges that are not just a backdrop; these peaks loom before us, their contours rippling in the evening air. Sassetta here achieves a compelling sense of natural space.

# Domenico di Bartolo

The first Sienese painter to capture some of the gravity of the Florentine Renaissance is Domenico di Bartolo (c. 1400–1447). The influence of Masaccio is apparent in his *Madonna of Humility* (fig. 14.4), which, judging by its modest size, was probably intended for personal devotion.



14.4. DOMENICO DI BARTOLO. *Madonna of Humility.* 1433. Panel, 36⅝ × 23¼" (93 × 59 cm). Pinacoteca, Siena.

By representing the Madonna seated low upon a cushion, the artist endowed her with the virtue of humility, and this pose, first developed by Simone Martini in the 1330s, was widespread by the early Quattrocento. Domenico has packed his picture with bulky, Masaccioesque figures that are firmly placed in space. But Domenico's Sienese linearism required every shape to be surrounded by a sharp contour that somewhat negates the modeling so important in the Florentine Early Renaissance. The Christ Child stuffs fingers instead of grapes into his mouth, and the angels with their elaborate curls have nothing to do with Masaccio's ragamuffins. The scroll (*cartellino*) in the foreground states that Domenico "painted and prayed to" this Madonna. This unexpected inscription suggests that the painting may have been intended for the artist's private use or, perhaps, that a patron or purchaser would not have been unhappy with the painter's devotions to the Madonna while he was painting her.

Domenico's major surviving achievement is his participation in a series of frescoes in the Pellegrinaio, the hall for pilgrims at Siena's Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala (figs. 14.5–14.6). Our interest in the series is heightened by their unusual secular subjects, which deal with the charitable, civic, and medical activities of the hospital and, by extension, the Sienese government and population. The Gothic vaulting of the room established arched frames, through which we look, as if through windows, back into the spaces and events of the fifteenth century. Some of the settings seem to be the rooms of the hospital; attesting to Domenico's accuracy is the three-legged basin shown in use in the *Care of the Sick* (fig. 14.6), which survives and is displayed at a nearby museum. In this image, Domenico combines specific portraiture with a carefully observed treatment of the male nude. The unidealized bodies of the sick man being placed in bed and the wounded man being washed exemplify the new interest in realism and are unthinkable without the influence of Masaccio. In their naturalism and wealth of imagery drawn from contemporary life, these frescoes provide remarkable insights into Sienese activities.

In addition to saints and prophets and *The Care of the Sick* shown here, the subjects represented in the Pellegrinaio frescoes emphasized the history of the hospital and the wide reach of its charitable activities: *The Founding of the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, The Building of the Hospital, Pope Celestine III Granting the Hospital Privileges, The Blessed Agostino Novello, Giving the Cloak of Office to the Rector, The Reception of Pilgrims, The Distribution of Alms, The Feeding of the Poor,* and *The Rearing and Marriage of Female Orphans.* There were also seven scenes drawn from the Old Testament story of Tobias, but these have been lost.

14.5. DOMENICO DI BARTOLO and others. View of the fresco cycle in the Pellegrinaio, Hospital of Sta. Maria della Scala, Siena. 1440s.



14.6. DOMENICO DI BARTOLO. *Care of the Sick*. 1440–47. Fresco. Pellegrinaio, Hospital of Sta. Maria della Scala, Siena (see fig. 14.5). Commissioned by the hospital administration under the direction of the rector, Giovanni di Francesco Buzzichelli.

# Matteo di Giovanni

In their isolation, the Sienese painters of the second half of the Quattrocento inverted Florentine inventions to achieve personal poetic and expressive effects, absorbing the details of Renaissance architectural decoration while ignoring its harmony and dignified proportions, and transforming the linear grace of Botticelli to their own ends. One of the most subjective is Matteo di Giovanni (1435?–1495), who is best known for four monumental compositions of the Massacre of the Innocents, three for Sienese churches and one executed in inlaid stone for the pavement of Siena's Duomo. The popularity of such a horrific subject is perhaps due to the massacre of Christian children by the Saracens at Otranto in southern Italy in 1480. In Matteo's treatment of the theme for Sant' Agostino of 1482 (fig. 14.7), the arches and columns of Herod's palace suggest that the artist had visited Rome. He has left no foreground space, and every inch of Herod's hall is occupied by screaming mothers, dead or dying babies, and bloodthirsty soldiers. The marble pavement is covered with infant corpses. Impassive courtiers flank Herod's throne, while the gloating king is portrayed as a monster, one hand outstretched to order the butchery, the other, like a claw, clutching the marble sphinx on the arm of his throne. Matteo draws our attention to the soldier near the right-hand column, who pauses in his bloody task to look straight at the spectator. Can this be Matteo himself, trapped within this holocaust of his own creation?

# Vecchietta

The visits of the Florentine sculptors Donatello and Ghiberti and the intermittent presence of the native Jacopo della Quercia provided the impetus for Renaissance developments by local sculptors in Siena. One of the most memorable, Lorenzo di Pietro, called Vecchietta (1412–1480), was also a painter. He was engaged to work with Masolino at an early age, picked up elements from the Florentine painters at mid-century, and executed one of the frescoes at the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala. His most remarkable work is the *Risen Christ* (fig. 14.8), a bronze figure harrowing in its insistence on such realistic details as the veins on the legs, arms, and torso. The dramatic expressiveness of Christ's emaciated body suggests the influence of the late Donatello. The artist's personal involvement is



14.7. MATTEO DI GIOVANNI.
*Massacre of the Innocents.* 1482.
Panel, 7'11" × 7'10½" (2.4 × 2.4 m).
Sant'Agostino, Siena.

14.8. VECCHIETTA. *Risen Christ*. 1476. Bronze, height 6' (1.8 m). ⛪ Sta. Maria della Scala, Siena. Created by the artist for his own tomb chapel at the Hospital of Sta. Maria della Scala.

## Francesco di Giorgio

Francesco di Giorgio (1439–1502)—architect, sculptor, and painter—was the only Sienese Quattrocento artist except for Jacopo della Quercia to acquire a reputation outside of Siena; he worked at the courts of Urbino, Naples, and Milan, where he was influenced by Leonardo da Vinci. His large *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 14.9) has a spatial composition that is difficult to unravel. A marble



14.9. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO. *Coronation of the Virgin*. 1471. Panel, 11' × 6'6" (3.4 × 2 m). Pinacoteca, Siena. Probably commissioned for the high altar of the Benedictine monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, near Siena.

evident in the touching petition he addressed to hospital officials asking that he be permitted to place this statue, a personal expression of late Quattrocento religiosity, in the chapel where his tomb was to be located. The idea that an artist would have a prominent tomb marked by an important work of art is an indication of the rapidly changing status of artists during this period. Later, in the sixteenth century, Raphael was laid in state and then buried in the ancient Roman Pantheon (see fig. 1.2), and both Titian and Michelangelo started but left unfinished representations of the Pietà intended to mark their own tombs (see figs. 19.27, 20.16).

floor recedes to steps that end at a wall articulated by pilasters and paneled in veined marble. The floor and steps are crowded with saints, while prophets sit atop the wall. Angels and cherubs support a floating platform of cherub wings and heads on which Mary kneels to receive her crown from Christ. At the top, a foreshortened figure of God the Father, feet first, is surrounded by a spinning cloud based on Dante's description: the concentric circles around God represent the seven heavens, each having a planetary sign from the zodiac. At the apex, inside the highest circle, is an array of female nudes based on Dante's statement that the final heaven, or empyrean, was "pieno d'amore" ("full of love").

A master of perspective, Francesco here renounces it to represent a synopsis of the Christian universe, including nine hierarchies of angels and eight of souls. In spite of the Renaissance treatment of figures and drapery, the effect is of an abstract schema, like Duccio's *Maestà*, which nobody in Siena was ever quite able to forget (see figs. 4.5–4.8). The mournful faces and staring eyes are as characteristic of Francesco's paintings as are the treatment of drapery and hair and the poses of the figures. The dramatic and unexpected color scheme is dominated by reds, orange-reds, and several shades of bright blue.

Francesco's sculpture shows a close acquaintance with the works of Donatello, Ghiberti, and Antonio del Pollaiuolo. His *Flagellation* relief (fig. 14.10), probably modeled and cast in bronze during Francesco's stay in Urbino in the late 1470s, provides a striking contrast to the earlier *Flagellation* by Piero della Francesca (see fig. 11.29). The spatial impression created by the central portico and flanking architectural masses recalls Ghiberti's reliefs on the *Gates of Paradise* (see figs. 10.1, 10.14), but the handling of the figures, left rough and sketchy after being cast in bronze, is derived from Donatello's late style (see figs. 12.8–12.9). The tormented pose of Christ, with his head thrown back, and the wild movement of the yelling man who beats him suggest the poses and expressions of Pollaiuolo.

The buildings Francesco portrayed are new in style, as were those he designed and built. The second stories of the palaces in the background of the *Flagellation* are raised on ground stories treated like gigantic podia, thus emphasizing what came to be known as the *piano nobile* (the second story, where the nobles lived). On the left, Francesco provided this second story with balconies. These two-story palaces, which contrast with the three-story palaces common in Florence and other Italian cities, seem to have been Francesco's invention. Bramante, the most important architect of the High Renaissance and a citizen of Urbino, may have received the idea from Francesco. Also influential is the emphasis Francesco gave to the windows, which



14.10. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO. *Flagellation*. Late 1470s. Bronze, 22 × 16" (55.9 × 40.6 cm). Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

are treated as independent tabernacles with sharply projecting frames, some composed of pilasters supporting a pediment and resting upon a continuous cornice. These were taken up by Bramante, Raphael, Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, and Michelangelo, and became a constant feature of monumental architecture through the later Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Some of the grandest constructions of the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento were sanctuaries built to enshrine miracle-working images of the Virgin, including Giuliano da Sangallo's Santa Maria delle Carceri in Prato (see figs. 12.21–12.23) and Francesco's Santa Maria del Calcinaio (fig. 14.11), near Cortona. A miraculous image was found there in 1484, and the influx of pilgrims was so great that Francesco was commissioned to design a church to contain them. It was completed in 1515, long after the architect's death, but the initial phases of construction seem to have proceeded rapidly, and there was enough built to dedicate the building in 1485. The plan is a Latin cross (fig. 14.12), its nave having three bays of diminishing depth to increase the apparent length of the church as seen

*Above:* 14.11. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO. Sta. Maria del Calcinaio, Cortona. Begun 1484–85; completed 1515, by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder.
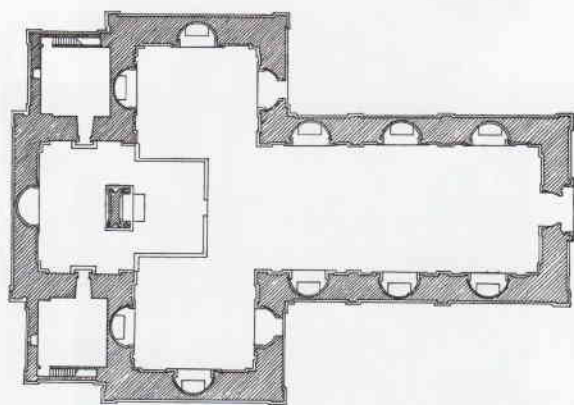


14.12. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO. Plan of Sta. Maria del Calcinaio, Cortona. Begun 1484–85; completed 1515.



14.13. FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO. Interior, Sta. Maria del Calcinaio, Cortona. Begun 1484–85; completed 1515.

from the entrance, a device already used at the Gothic church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (see fig. 2.35). Francesco's lofty two-storied hall is roofed by a barrel vault (fig. 14.13) and articulated by pilasters. The Corinthian order of the second floor, which is visually supported by flat unmolded strips on the lower floor, supports the same kind of heavy entablature and cornice seen in the palaces of his *Flagellation.*

The tabernacle windows, with their sharply projecting pediments, are identical inside and out, and are the direct ancestors of the tabernacles that play such an important role in the architecture of Michelangelo (see fig. 18.11). All four ends of the Latin cross plan are flat. An unbroken entablature encircles the church, and the plain white

plaster walls and barrel vaults suggest a space larger than the one they actually enclose. The tabernacles in *pietra serena* seem to be independent sculptural entities within the broad expanses of white wall.

## Neroccio de' Landi

Neroccio de' Landi (1447–1500), like many other late fifteenth-century Sienese artists, probably studied with Vecchietta, but he was also influenced by Francesco di Giorgio, with whom he collaborated between 1468 and 1475. Like both these artists, Neroccio was both painter and sculptor. In 1483, he designed a figure of the Hellespontine Sibyl that was translated into inlaid marble for the decorated pavement of Siena Cathedral (see fig. 2.26).

*Portrait of a Woman* (fig. 14.14) epitomizes Neroccio's style. The sitter is probably one of the three daughters of Bandino Bandini, a wealthy Sienese citizen; a costly dress and impressive jewels convey her status. The jewelry is simple in design, with an extensive use of pearls and some

14.14. NEROCCIO DE' LANDI. *Portrait of a Woman*. c. 1485. Panel, $28^5/_{16} \times 17^{15}/_{16}$ (61.8 × 45.6 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The frame is possibly original. The letters "OP" and "NER" to either side of the text below are an abbreviation of the artist's signature: "OPUS NEROCCIO."

Artemisia, Tiberius Gracchus, Scipio Africanus, Claudia Quinta, and Sulpicia—suggesting that this group must have been selected by the patron, probably in consultation with a local humanist. In the Renaissance household, such groupings of figures were intended both as inspirations and as warnings. The inclusion of the chaste Claudia Quinta, painted by Neroccio (fig. 14.15), speaks to the importance of this virtue for Renaissance women. This young Roman woman was falsely accused of impropriety. She prayed to Cybele, the Mother Goddess worshipped in Rome, and when a ship transporting a gilded statue of Cybele to Rome became stuck in the Tiber River, Claudia pulled the ship free using only a thin cord, as seen in the



14.15. NEROCCIO DE' LANDI. *Claudia Quinta*, from a cycle of Famous Men and Women. c. 1490/95. Panel, $41^5/_{16} \times 18^1/_2$ (105 × 46 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Probably commissioned by the Piccolomini family of Siena, as suggested by the family emblem of crescent moons held by *putti* below the figure.
The occasion may have been the marriage of Silvio di Bartolommeo Piccolomini, grand-nephew of Pope Pius II (see p. 359) in 1493.

large red stones, perhaps rubies; it can be compared to the delicate filigree earrings seen in Sienese painting of a century earlier (see fig. 4.27). Her cap and the neckline of her dress and undergarment are also decorated with pearls. Everything seems designed to set off her pale skin and the pale blonde hair that in Siena at the time would have been most unusual. The brocade of her dress and hat were originally executed in gold leaf, and gold touches add highlights to the trees and clouds in the background. The sitter's loose hair indicates that she is unmarried: married Sienese women wore their hair pulled up in a knot. The Latin text below the figure refers to both her accomplishments and the appropriate female virtue of modesty: "Whatever a human being is permitted to, I attain through my prodigious art; yet, a mortal competing with the gods, I achieve nothing."

Neroccio and three other artists participated in the creation of a cycle of Famous Men and Women, of which seven panels survive. The selection of figures for the cycle is unusual—Joseph of Egypt, Alexander the Great,

right background. She thus proved her innocence to those gathered on the left, near the city gate. Elegantly posed on a pedestal before the narrative and landscape background, Claudia wears a transparent veil that flows out to the right, adding a slight suggestion of movement. The text on the plaque held by *putti* below tells her story and states that "Prudence and virtue triumph."

# Perugia

Located on top of a high hill in the Etruscan manner, Perugia dominates a considerable section of modern Umbria and southern Tuscany. Although the city embellished itself with splendid buildings, and a number of Roman, Florentine, and Sienese painters worked at nearby Assisi, Perugia produced an important school of painting only in the last decades of the Quattrocento.

# Perugino

The leading painter of the Perugian School was Pietro Vannucci (c. 1450–1523). He was born in Città della Pieve,

and is known today simply as Perugino (the Perugian). He brought the city from artistic obscurity to considerable renown and, as the teacher of Raphael, had a hand in shaping the High Renaissance. Where Perugino received his training is not known, but by 1472 he was a mature master and a member of the Company of St. Luke in Florence. He may have worked with Verrocchio for a period, and he certainly absorbed Florentine notions of perspective and figure drawing, but he rapidly developed a distinctive style. He had little interest in creating dramatic or emotional religious images—Vasari said he was an atheist—and he often reduced his figures to routine patterns. The breadth and distance of his spatial backgrounds, however, established a new type of composition that integrated figures within the painted landscape. For a drawing by Perugino, see figure 1.20.

The principles of Perugino's spatial composition are evident in *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* in the Sistine Chapel (figs. 14.16), part of the program commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV in 1481 (figs. 14.17–14.18; see also pp. 332–34). Perugino represented the moment when Christ gives Peter the keys to heaven and earth, and the structure



14.16. PERUGINO. *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter.* c. 1480–82. Fresco, 11'5½" × 18'8½" (3.5 × 5.7 m). Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV. Like Botticelli, Perugino had to lodge a complaint against the pope in order to be paid for his work.

*Above:* 14.17. View of the side wall of the Sistine Chapel, with Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (see fig. 14.16). c. 1480–82. Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere. For another fresco in the cycle, see fig. 13.19.



| OT-7 | OT-6 | OT-5 | | OT-4 | OT-3 | OT-2 | OT-1 | | NT-1 |
|------|------|------|---|------|------|------|------|---|------|
| | | R-5 | R 4 | R-3 | R-2 | R-1 | R-6 | A | R-7 |

SOUTH WALL                                                                                          ALTAR WALL
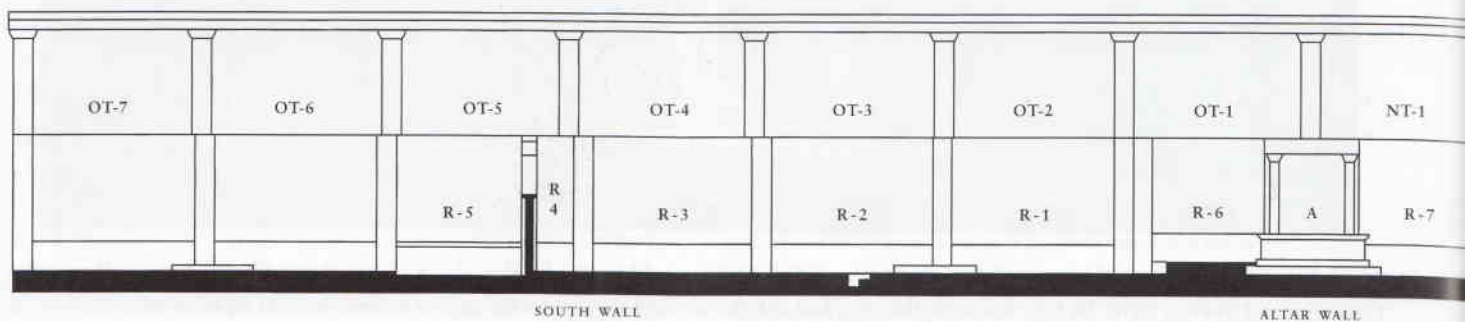
*Below:* 14.18. Iconographic diagram of the side walls of the Sistine Chapel.

Note: all frescoes on the altar wall were destroyed by Michelangelo when he painted his *Last Judgment* (see figs. 20.1–20.4).

FRESCOED ALTARPIECE

A. *Assumption of the Virgin*, by Pietro Perugino, 1481–82 (destroyed).

FRESCOES OF THE UPPER WALLS

OLD TESTAMENT LIFE OF MOSES, 1481–82:
OT-1. *Finding of Moses*, by Perugino (destroyed).
OT-2. *Moses' Journey into Egypt*, by Sandro Botticelli.
OT-3. *Moses in Egypt*, by Botticelli.
OT-4. *Crossing of the Red Sea*, by Cosimo Rosselli.
OT-5. *Adoration of the Golden Calf*, by Rosselli.
OT-6. *Punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*, by Botticelli (fig. 13.19).
OT-7. *Last Days of Moses*, by Luca Signorelli.
OT-8. *Contest over the Body of Moses*, by Signorelli (on east wall, destroyed)

FRESCOES OF THE UPPER WALLS

NEW TESTAMENT LIFE OF CHRIST, 1481–82:
NT-1. *Nativity of Christ*, by Perugino (destroyed).
NT-2. *Baptism of Christ*, by Perugino.
NT-3. *Christ Heals the Leper*, by Botticelli.
NT-4. *Calling of the Apostles*, by Domenico Ghirlandaio.
NT-5. *Sermon on the Mount*, by Rosselli.
NT-6. *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter*, by Perugino (figs. 14.16).
NT-7. *Last Supper*, by Rosselli.
NT-8. *Resurrection of Christ*, by Ghirlandaio (on east wall, destroyed).

in the center of the piazza is doubtless intended to represent symbolically the Church as an institution, founded on the "rock" of St. Peter. It is surely no accident that this theme establishing the authority of the pope is opposite Botticelli's fresco showing the punishment of usurpers who tried to assume the role of Moses (see fig. 13.19). Notice too that the buildings in Perugino's painting are in pristine condition, in opposition to the decayed architecture painted by Botticelli. Perugino's central structure is flanked by triumphal arches, modeled on Constantine's arch in Rome, and bearing inscriptions comparing the building achievements of Sixtus to those of Solomon. In the middle ground the scene in which Christ says "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21) is shown to the left; to the right is the stoning of Christ, who, according to the Gospel of St. John, hid himself, then passed through the midst of his assailants.

The perspective of the piazza is constructed according to Alberti's system, although with larger squares, probably to avoid the visual complexity that would have resulted from using the size of square—three for the height of a human figure in the foreground—that the Albertian system recommended. The figures and drapery masses echo the works of Florentine painters and sculptors from Masaccio to Verrocchio, and the ideal church blends elements drawn from the Baptistery of Florence and Brunelleschi's dome (see figs. 2.33, 6.7).

TAPESTRIES DESIGNED BY RAPHAEL (CONJECTURAL PLACEMENT), 1515–16:
R-1. *Conversion of St. Paul* (fig. 17.58).
R-2. *Blinding of Elymas.*
R-3. *Sacrifice at Lystra.*
R-4. *St. Paul in Prison.*
R-5. *St. Paul Preaching at Athens* (for cartoon, see fig. 17.59).
R-6. *Stoning of St. Stephen.*
R-7. *Miraculous Draught of Fishes.*
R-8. *Christ's Charge to Peter.*
R-9. *Healing of the Lame Man* (for cartoon, see fig. 17.57).
R-10. *Death of Ananias.*



| NT-2 | NT-3 | NT-4 | NT-5 | NT-6 | NT-7 | NT-8 | OT-8 |
| R-8 | R-9 | R-10 | | | | DOOR | |

NORTH WALL                    ENTRANCE WALL
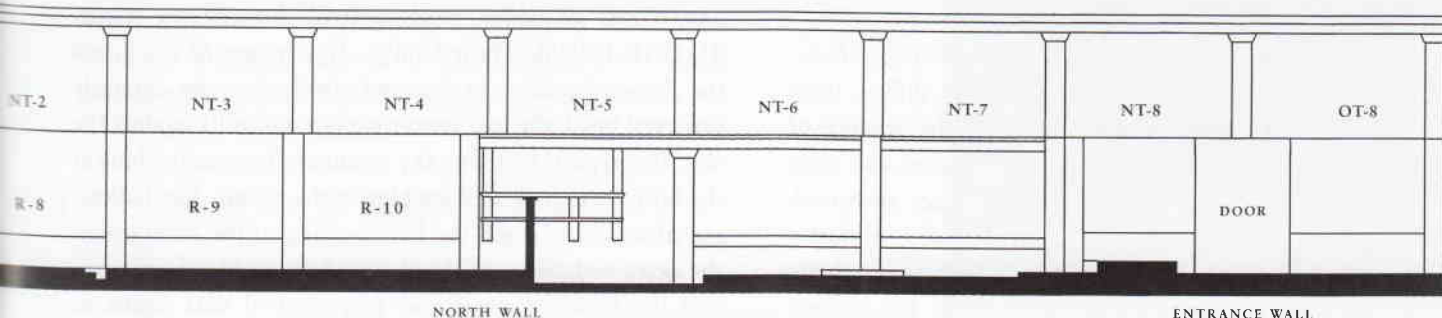
The fresco's effect of openness, however, is strikingly un-Florentine. While frames, figures, or architecture usually enclose Florentine spatial compositions, Perugino allows the eye to wander freely through his piazza. It is filled with little but sunlight and air, and we can easily imagine its continued extension to the sides. No such immense urban piazza was ever built in the Renaissance; it would have been impractical and hardly a good example of urban planning. But in Perugino's painting it provides a sense of liberation, as if the spectator could move freely in any direction. The buildings block the climax of the perspective scheme, but the viewer's eye moves easily to the horizon, where the hills form what has been called the "bowl landscape" characteristic of the paintings of Perugino and his followers.

Perugino's figures are only superficially Florentine, for they stand with comparable ease, free from tension. Their poses are repetitive: one foot generally carries the weight, with the hip slightly moved to the side, one knee bent, and the head tilted, the figure as a whole seeming to flow gently upward. Raphael adopted this pose from Perugino, and it survived, in altered and spatially enriched form, to the final phases of his art. Like those of the other collaborators in the Sistine frescoes, Perugino's main figures occupy a shallow foreground plane, and the grace of their stance, united with flowing drapery and a looping motion in the composition, carries the eye almost effortlessly across the foreground from one figure to the next. Perugino's fresco is one of the most impressive examples of the Quattrocento interest in illusionism.

Perugino has been credited with the supervision of the entire cycle because he painted not only this subject—which is of primary importance to papal claims—but also other important scenes in the chapel and the frescoed altarpiece of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which was destroyed when Michelangelo painted his *Last Judgment* on the altar wall (see fig. 20.1). It is not clear, however, if one artist served as the supervisor; none of the painters called to Rome had had much experience with monumental frescoes and all were relatively young.

Even before Michelangelo's ceiling and Last Judgment additions, the chapel's scale, decoration, and iconography had established it as one of the grandest examples of Italian art.

Perugino's *Crucifixion with the Virgin and Sts. John, Jerome, and Mary Magdalene* (fig. 14.19) differs from Florentine representations of this scene in the absence of strong emotion. Christ hangs calmly on the cross and none of the saints betrays a trace of grief. We are surprised, moreover, to note that Mary Magdalen's pose is almost a carbon copy of John's; there is no difference between them, save for a slight change in the position of the clasped

hands. Perugino seems to have made a pattern book of stock poses and to have repeated them even within the same picture, such repetition helping to create the calm, lucid quality. In the final analysis, the color of the painting is so cool and silvery, the finish so sensitive and exact, and the mood so poetic that the absence of emotion seems completely appropriate.

The fantastic rocks are characteristic of an eroded plateau in the upper Arno Valley, and the jagged profiles and sparse foliage against the sky are exploited for artistic effect, as are the floating S-curves of Christ's loincloth. Such detailed realism shows the influence of Netherlandish painting, in particular, Hans Memling. Much of the picture's effect is gained from the precision with which leaves, twigs, wildflowers, and a castle or two are represented against the backgrounds of earth or sky. The flowers in the foreground are botanically accurate, and each has a symbolism relating to the altarpiece's content.

It seems that Memling also influenced Perugino as a portraitist. *Francesco delle Opere* (fig. 14.20) is the direct ancestor of portraits by Perugino's pupil Raphael, such as those of *Angelo Doni* and *Maddalena Strozzi Doni* (see figs. 16.49–16.50). The subject is placed behind a ledge—a typical Netherlandish device—on which he rests his hands, one of which holds a scroll bearing the motto TIMETE DEUM ("Fear God"). An expanse of sea forms the distant horizon, in front of which rises the carefully observed head, the hair streaming out naturally against the sky. This typical Perugino sky graduates from milky blue at the horizon to a clear, deep blue at the zenith. The balancing of mass and void, the harmonizing of the contours of the sitter with those of the sloping hills and feathery trees, and the sense of quiet and easy control that seems to
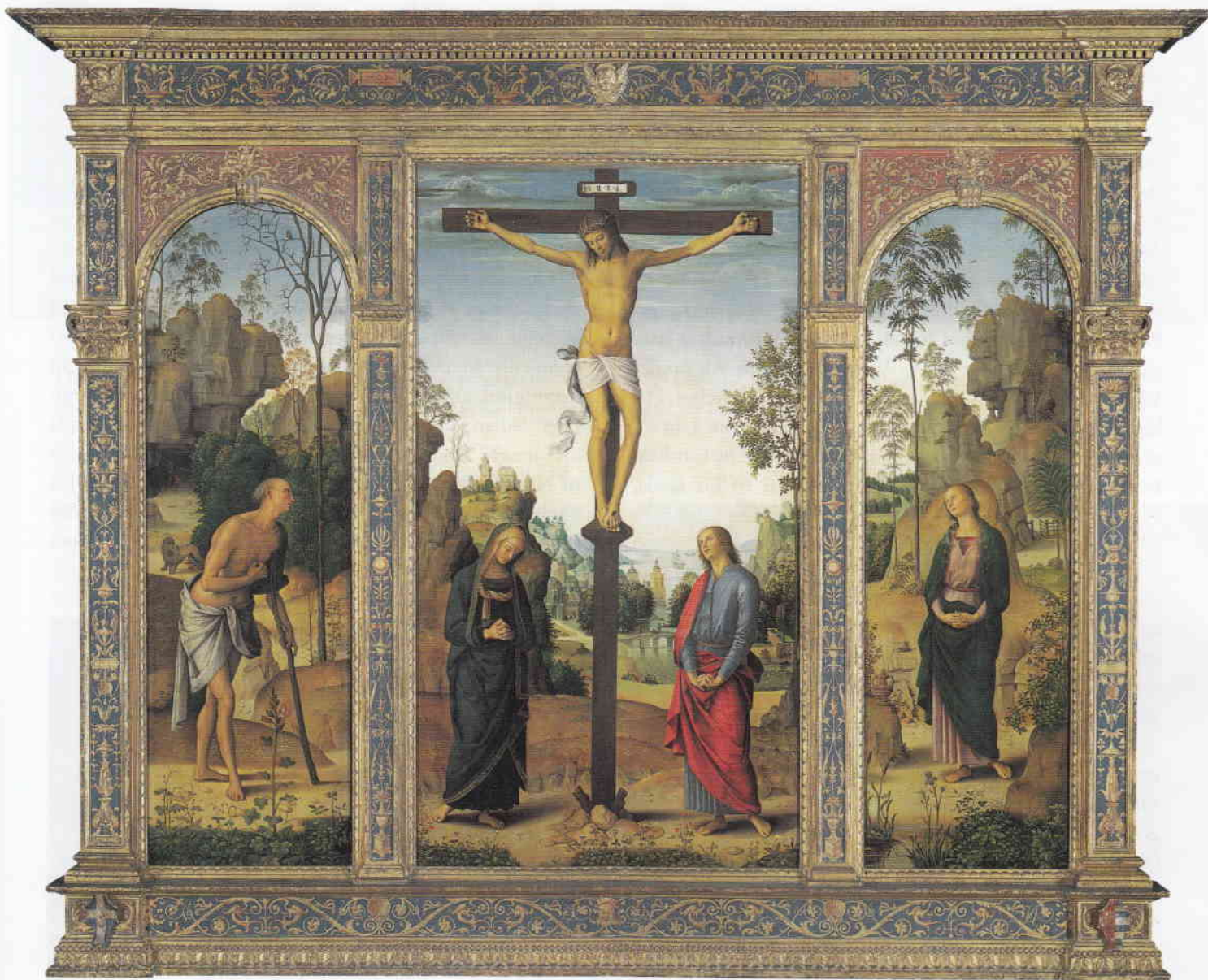
emanate from Francesco delle Opere all mark a new stage in the development of portraiture.

Like all central Italian painters who made their reputations in the 1470s—save only Leonardo da Vinci—Perugino arrived at the threshold of the High Renaissance but did not cross it. The grand style emerged in Florence and developed in Rome, while in Perugia Perugino continued to paint his oval-faced Madonnas and serene landscapes. Ironically, Perugino outlived his pupil Raphael, one of the leading artists of the High Renaissance, by three years.



14.20. PERUGINO. *Francesco delle Opere*. 1494. Panel, 20⅛ × 16⅞" (51 × 42 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

# Pintoricchio

The works of the Perugian painter Bernardino di Betto (c. 1454–1513), known by the nickname "Pintoricchio," (the suffix "-icchio" means small, so "small painter") are impressive accomplishments in pictorial representation, combined with an interest in clear narrative and sumptuous decorative detail. The success of his work cannot be gauged by reproductions, even in color, because so much of his paintings' appeal depends on their large scale and relationship to the spaces for which they were created. A co-worker of Perugino in the Sistine Chapel frescoes, Pintoricchio later painted an apartment in the Vatican for Pope Alexander VI, as well as chapels and ceilings in Roman churches. His largest work is the fresco cycle in the Piccolomini Library of the Cathedral of Siena, commissioned in 1502 by Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini to celebrate the life of his uncle, Pope Pius II (figs. 14.1, 14.21–14.22). After the death of Alexander VI in 1503, Cardinal Piccolomini succeeded

him as Pope Pius III, but lived to reign less than a month. Nevertheless, the fresco series financed by the Piccolomini heirs kept Pintoricchio busy until 1508.

The library was built to house the manuscripts assembled by Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini), one of the most learned humanists of his age. After his election as pope, he poured the revenues of the papacy into this library. The frescoes narrate an embellished version of his life before and after his election. Their flattery contrasts with the salty memoirs of the pope himself, which, though long suppressed except in an expurgated version, furnish us with a vivid account of mid-Quattrocento events. The ten compartments are framed by illusionistic pilasters with *grotteschi* decoration, and by jambs and arches decorated with simulated red and white marble paneling. The *grotteschi* motifs are derived from Pintoricchio's visit to the Golden House of Nero in Rome, where he, like Ghirlandaio, carved his name into the ancient plaster to commemorate his visit. We look through the arches of this gigantic loggia into scenes



14.21. View of the fresco program in the Piccolomini Library, 🏛 Cathedral, Siena. 1503–8. Fresco.
The exterior façade of the library, on the interior of Siena Cathedral, is decorated with marble architectural motifs and sculptures and a pair of bronze gates. The contract that Pintoricchio signed set the total price at 1,000 gold ducats; he received 200 ducats immediately to pay for pigment and gold leaf and another 100 ducats for what we might call "moving expenses" for himself and his assistants, one of whom was the young Raphael. Raphael provided Pintoricchio with compositional drawings for at least three of the ten scenes, including fig. 14.1. Pintoricchio received 50 ducats when each large narrative scene was completed, and another 200 ducats when the job was complete. After the patron died in 1503, his heirs commissioned Pintoricchio to add an eleventh large narrative on the exterior of the library representing Cardinal Francesco Pintoricchio's coronation as Pope Pius III. The library thus commemorates both Piccolomini popes, Pius II and Pius III.

| | AUDIENCE WITH KING JAMES I OF SCOTLAND | AENEAS SILVIUS PICCOLOMINI IS CROWNED BY FREDERICK III | HOMAGE BEFORE EUGENIUS IV, ORDINATION | PRESENTATION OF FREDERICK III TO ELENORA OF PORTUGAL | | ELEVATION TO CARDINAL | CORONATION OF PIUS II | CONGRESS OF MANTUA | CANONIZATION OF CATHERINE OF SIENA | LAST HOMAGE IN ANCONA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

ENTRANCE WALL
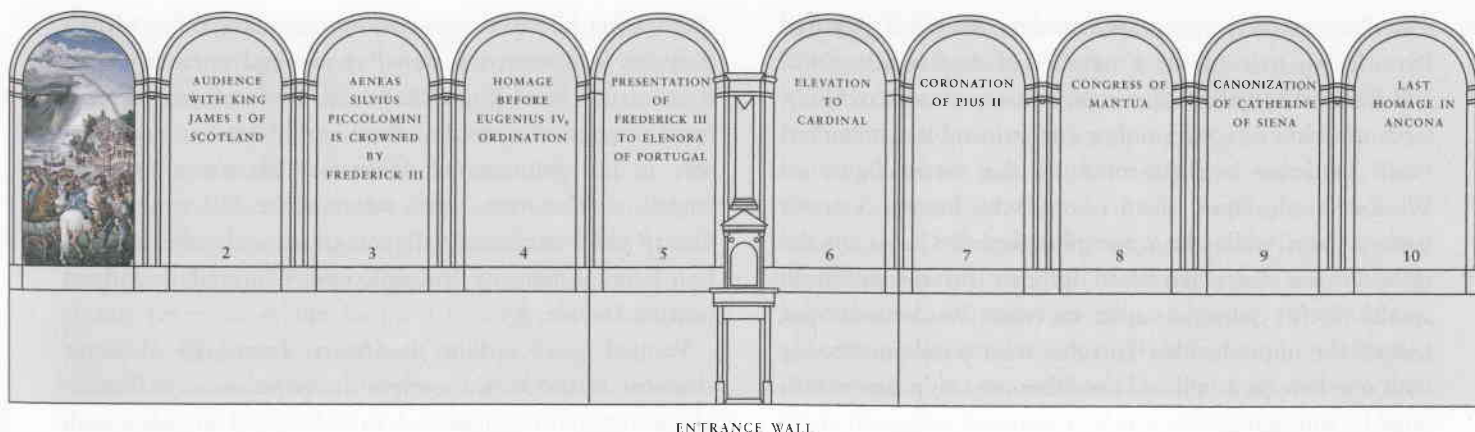
14.22. Iconographic diagram of Pintoricchio's fresco program in the Piccolomini Library, Cathedral, Siena. Diagram by Sarah Cameron Loyd, after Roettgen. For number 1, *Departure of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini for Basel*, see fig. 14.1.

from Aeneas Silvius's life. The pageant-like incidents display a panoply of colorful clothing against fanciful architectural or landscape backgrounds, except when a recognizable setting was required by the narrative.

In figure 14.1, the youthful Aeneas Silvius, secretary to a cardinal, is represented leaving Genoa for the Council of Basel, where his performance was so disloyal to the papacy that he had to do penance before Pope Eugenius IV. To the right we see ships at anchor in port, while at sea the cardinal's galleys are lashed by a storm. Genoa, of course, never looked like this; Pintoricchio instead represented an Italian hill town with a Romanesque church and a castle on top of the hill. But if his representation of Genoa is derived from local experience, so is his storm. One of the earliest realistic storm scenes preserved, it is made convincing by the dark veils of rain, bent by the force of the wind, and the dramatic color of the thunderclouds.

While Pintoricchio was working on the library frescoes, he also designed a panel for the inlaid marble floor of Siena's Duomo. The cathedral's paving, with narratives and allegories including an enormous *Massacre of the Innocents* by Matteo di Giovanni (see p. 364), took more than a century and involved many artists. Because the Sienese had been unsuccessful in expanding their cathedral in size, they apparently decided to ornament it as richly as possible. This unique floor is one of the results; while other cathedrals and churches have floors with a few figures surrounded by many panels of geometric patterning made largely of marble fragments, the Sienese floor is almost completely filled with narratives and figures. Unfortunately, over the centuries the scenes have been worn away by worshippers and visitors.

The theme Pintoricchio was assigned was *The Allegory of Fortune* (fig. 14.23), a subject laden with the complex symbolism so popular with the humanists of the period.



14.23. PINTORICCHIO. *The Allegory of Fortune*. 1505–6. Inlaid marble in diverse colors; partially reworked by Leopoldo Maccari in 1859. 🏛 Cathedral, Siena. Commissioned by Alberto Aringhieri, rector of the cathedral. This panel is in the nave, fourth from the entrance (see fig. 2.26). Vasari wrote that the inlaid marble floor of Siena Cathedral was "the most beautiful … great and magnificent pavement ever made."

The designer of the program is unknown, but it required Pintoricchio to combine a number of diverse allegorical and historical figures, all executed in a naturalistic, Quattrocento manner, into a rather uncomfortable whole. Virtuous behavior is represented by the seated figure of Wisdom at the apex of an island, who honors Socrates with a palm while the cynic philosopher Crates on the right throws away jewels to indicate his disinterest in wealth. Other pilgrims aspire to reach Wisdom, leaving behind the unpredictable Fortune, who stands unsteadily with one foot on a ball and the other on a ship that is buffeted by the changeable winds.

## Melozzo da Forlì

Every now and then in Italian art, an innovative painter develops in a center that lacks a local school of painting. Gentile da Fabriano was such a case, as was Piero della Francesca and, a little later, Melozzo da Forlì (1438–1494). Perhaps their isolation helped to make them among the most original of Renaissance artists. Forlì, the city of Melozzo's birth and early activity, is in the Romagna—at the time a string of papal-dominated communes along and near the Adriatic. This area is not far from Ravenna, where the renowned mosaics may have inspired the young Melozzo in the use of color and the combination of figures with architecture. Before Melozzo was thirty Giovanni Santi, father of Raphael, praised his work, as did other Quattrocento writers, but by the time Vasari published the first edition of his *Lives* in 1550, Melozzo had been forgotten and Vasari credited the frescoes reproduced here to Benozzo Gozzoli. Melozzo's detachment from the creative centers of Tuscany and central Italy and the limited number of his surviving works mean that even today he is often overlooked.

Melozzo began visiting Rome as early as 1460, and from about 1465 to 1475 may have been at the court of Urbino, where he would have worked for Federico da Montefeltro and come into contact with Piero della Francesca. Although Piero was certainly the dominant influence on his art, Melozzo's perspective interests seem to have been established even earlier. He probably encountered Alberti in Rome, and was certainly familiar with his teachings. He must also have been impressed by Netherlandish art, particularly that of the Fleming Justus of Ghent, who was active at Federico's court. Melozzo may have known Mantegna's work through Ansuino da Forlì, who worked for a period with Mantegna in Padua.

One of Melozzo's commissions was for a series of frescoes in the Vatican Library, which had been rebuilt and reorganized by Pope Sixtus IV. Most of the frescoes have perished, but *Sixtus IV della Rovere, his Nephews, and Platina, his Librarian* was removed and saved (fig. 14.24). It is the first surviving papal ceremonial portrait of the Renaissance (as distinguished from tomb effigies or portraits of popes disguised as their Early Christian predecessors in the paintings of Masaccio, Masolino, and Fra Angelico). The fresco once adorned the end wall of the library and was undoubtedly integrated with other decoration painted there by Domenico del Ghirlandaio and his brother Davide.

Painted piers within the fresco frame an audience chamber in the Vatican where the pope sits in a Renaissance armchair upholstered in velvet and studded with brass-headed nails. The four standing figures are portraits of his nephews, including, in the center, Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, who later became Pope Julius II. Before him kneels the humanist Platina, the library's director, who points downward to a Latin inscription he composed to extol the pope's achievements in restoring Rome. To heighten the illusion, Melozzo allowed the folds of Platina's cloak to overlap the frame.

The vanishing point of the architecture is level with the pope's knee. The room, not large by Renaissance stan-



14.24. MELOZZO DA FORLÌ. *Sixtus IV della Rovere, his Nephews, and Platina, his Librarian.* c. 1476–77. Fresco, detached from the Vatican Library and transferred to canvas, 13'1" × 10'4" (4 × 3 m). Pinacoteca, Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere.

dards, is impressive in its simple masses and clear ornamentation. Through an arch we see a transverse chamber with an arcade and coffered ceiling. Rosettes, palmettes, acanthus, bead-and-reel, and other ornaments from ancient Roman architecture are emphasized in gold. The entwined oak branches silhouetted against blue on the foremost piers refer to the coat of arms of the Della Rovere family of Sixtus IV and Cardinal Giuliano; oaks and acorns reappear in the Sistine Chapel frescoes commissioned by Giuliano after he became pope.

Melozzo avoided a formal grouping, yet each person is motionless, each face firmly composed and staring directly ahead. Melozzo's substances are solid, his drapery forms crisp, and his color beautiful, the display of crimson, violet, ultramarine, and blue-green intensified by the coolness of the pearly marble piers and the sparkle of the gilded ornament.

Melozzo's grandest commission, an apse fresco of the *Ascension of Christ* for the Early Christian basilica of Santi Apostoli in Rome, may have been given to him by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, whose titular church, San Pietro in Vincoli, was not far away. It has also been suggested that Pope Sixtus IV paid for the project. The pope consecrated the remodeled basilica in 1480, but it is not certain that the decorations were complete at that time. In the early eighteenth century the church was remodeled again, and Melozzo's fresco destroyed except for the central section and a number of fragments. From these it is possible to gain some notion of the appearance of the composition.

At the base of the apse a row of apostles stood looking up. A semicircle of angels playing musical instruments surrounded the central figure of the ascending Christ (fig. 14.25), who appears in the middle of clouds and *putti*, his arms extended, his hair and beard floating in the breeze, his eyes gazing downward. All the figures were painted as if seen from below, in the sharp foreshortening artists had been using since the days of Castagno and Uccello. But, as far as we know, this is the first time that a large-scale, monumental composition was painted to be seen from below in such a way that the mass of the building seemed to dissolve, creating the illusion that the figures hover in the air outside. Melozzo's composition inspired many ceiling painters, from Michelangelo, Raphael, and Correggio in the sixteenth century (see figs. 17.23, 17.71, 18.39) to the later painters of the Roman Baroque and Venetian Rococo. Melozzo's idea was not wholly original. A vault is often termed "il cielo" ("the sky") in Italian documents, and the traditional association of the dome with heaven goes back to antiquity. It is even possible that a similar mosaic originally decorated the apse of Santi Apostoli. But the crucial step—the erasure of the dome or half-dome by

creating a vision into space—was taken by Melozzo. The central figure of Christ hints at the openness of Melozzo's lost composition, but the full effect of even this fragment cannot be experienced unless you hold the illustration above eye level and tilt it slightly toward you. Then Christ appears to float on the clouds, as Melozzo intended—an effect that is even more powerful, of course, when the figure is seen full scale. Melozzo's insistence on solid form is as strong here as in the *Sixtus IV*, yet in this case the winds of heaven themselves seem to blow through the composition. As usual with Melozzo, the color is brilliant, the *putti* boasting red and green wings, the white cloak and violet tunic of Christ glowing against the sky, and the haloes dotted with gold, achieving in fresco something of the sparkle of mosaic.

As the official artist to Sixtus IV, Melozzo enjoyed the title of "pictor apostolicus" ("apostolic painter"). After his success as a painter of monumental frescoes, one wonders why he was not among the artists commissioned to paint in the Sistine Chapel; none of the artists the pope called to Rome for that commission had as much experience. In any event, Cardinal Girolamo Basso della Rovere, one of



14.25. MELOZZO DA FORLÌ. *Christ in Glory*, from the *Ascension*, c. 1479–80. Fragmentary fresco detached from the church of SS. Apostoli, Rome. Quirinal Palace, Rome. The patron was Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere.

Sixtus's nephews who appears in the group portrait, called Melozzo to Loreto, on the Adriatic coast, to decorate the sacristy of the basilica of the Santa Casa (fig. 14.26). This remarkable building, a favorite project of the Della Rovere family, was being constructed by Giuliano da Sangallo to enshrine a simple hut, the holy house (Santa Casa) of the Virgin Mary, which tradition held had been brought from the Holy Land to Loreto by angels in the thirteenth century. Melozzo completed only the frescoes in the dome, although the commission called for wall paintings as well. Nevertheless, it is his only cycle that survives unaltered in its original location, since his ceiling decorations for San Biagio in his hometown of Forlì were obliterated by a bomb in World War II.

Melozzo painted each facet of the dome with ornamental paneling composed of his favorite elements—guilloches, acanthus, bead-and-reel, palmettes, and dolphins—converging on a central garland of Della Rovere oak leaves that embraces the cardinal's coat of arms. In front of this illusionistic structure Melozzo rendered figures that seem to be sitting or floating in the actual space of the sacristy. The painted cornice framing the dome



14.27. Angel, detail of fig. 14.26.

is treated as a parapet, and on each segment sits a prophet holding a tablet with his name and a passage from his writings prophesying the Passion; the one exception is David, who holds his harp, while his tablet is propped beside him on the ledge. Above each prophet hovers an angel holding one of the instruments of the Passion. Above the angels, as a kind of repetition of the garland of oak leaves, is a circle of six-winged seraph heads. Melozzo even exploited such details as the soles of the angels' feet, shod or unshod, seen from below, and made the angels' wings cast shadows on the painted architecture of the dome so that they hover more convincingly in the space above our heads (fig. 14.27). The drapery glows with Melozzo's usual brilliance of color, and every face and lock of hair is painted with his customary firmness.

In 1484 Melozzo returned to Forlì, possibly because of the death of his patron, Sixtus IV.

## The Laurana Brothers and Urbino

In the late Quattrocento, Urbino was an important cultural center (see pp. 288–93). The sculpture and architecture that played a role in establishing the city's artistic significance were in part the work of two Slavic brothers born in Dalmatia. This area of the Adriatic coast had been colonized by Venetians and was open to the influences of Italian culture.



14.26. MELOZZO DA FORLÌ. Fresco cycle. 1477–80(?).
Sacristy of St. Mark, Basilica of the Sta. Casa, Loreto.
Commissioned by Cardinal Girolamo Basso della Rovere.

The sculptor Francesco Laurana (c. 1420–1503) was active in Naples, Palermo, and Milan, as well as in France. His portrait bust of Battista Sforza, countess of Urbino (fig. 14.28), whom we have already met in Piero della Francesca's profile portrait (see fig. 11.31), is typical of his ideals of elegance. This serene head has much in common with the heads in Piero della Francesca's Arezzo frescoes (see figs. 11.23–11.24) because of Francesco's insistence on geometric or quasi-geometric volumes and clear contours. The transitions from shape to shape seem simplified but in reality they are rich and subtle. When compared to Quattrocento male busts, however (see figs. 10.28, 12.15), this, like most of the female busts of the time, seems relatively characterless, revealing and perhaps propagating the restrained role women were expected to play in society.

After an extended search for an artist "learned in the mysteries" of classical architecture, in 1468 Federico da Montefeltro announced that he could find no one in Tuscany, "fountainhead of architects," and appointed Francesco Laurana's brother Luciano (d. 1479) as chief architect of his enormous unfinished palace. Luciano had probably already been at work on the project for two years, for he had sent a model for the building from



14.28. FRANCESCO LAURANA. *Battista Sforza*. c. 1473. Marble, height approx. 20" (51 cm). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Perhaps commissioned by Federico da Montefeltro.

Mantua in 1466. Luciano is only one of several architects listed in the Urbino records as working for Federico, however, and it is hard to distinguish who might have designed what. One of the most impressive spaces of the Palazzo Ducale is its courtyard (fig. 14.29), the construction of which can be dated during the years of Luciano's activity. It is therefore generally assumed that he was its architect.

In contemplating the design of the courtyard, we must mentally strip away the two upper stories, added later, and imagine that the structure ends with the cornice of the second story. Thus reduced, the courtyard emerges as among the most harmonious constructions of the Renaissance. Luciano adopted the proportional scheme popularized by Brunelleschi, for each bay of the lower floor is an exact square articulated by semicircular arches. The second-story windows are two-thirds the height and one-third the width of each bay. But Luciano avoided some major Florentine difficulties. First, he managed to unite both stories with a single scheme, so there is no longer the sense of a solid second story weighing down upon an open arcade. He achieved this by giving the second story an order of Corinthian pilasters that harmonize with the Composite columns of the arcade and by setting these stone pilasters against a wall of the tan brick that is also used in the spandrels of the arcade below. The columns, pilasters, entablatures, and windows are set off against brick walls to give the Palazzo Ducale the appearance of an open framework—an effect unprecedented in Renaissance architecture. Secondly, Luciano turned each corner in a way that completes both corner arches instead of having them come to rest on the same capital, in the rather uncomfortable way we found in Florentine courtyards (see figs. 6.26, 12.18). This problem necessitated even greater ingenuity. Luciano decided to treat each face of the courtyard as if it were a separate façade, complete in itself. He therefore terminated each side of the arcade and *piano nobile* with superimposed pilasters.

Whether or not Luciano's solutions are fully consistent with the doctrines of Alberti, they probably would have pleased him. Certainly the theorist would have enjoyed—and possibly did—the friezes ornamented with inscriptions extolling Federico's virtues in handsome capital letters in a style derived from ancient Roman monuments. As compared with the verticality and density of Florentine Renaissance architecture, the columns, pilasters, windows, and even the letters of the inscriptions are widely spaced, emphasizing the horizontality of the courtyard. The skill with which the intricate problems of form and space are solved and the consequent effect of harmonious calm mark a determined step in the direction of High Renaissance architecture. Bramante, born in Urbino and twenty-four

14.29. LUCIANO LAURANA. Courtyard, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino. c. 1467–72. Later completed by Francesco di Giorgio. Commissioned by Federico da Montefeltro. Many of the interior rooms have doors, windows, consoles, and fireplaces decorated with exquisite carvings in the Renaissance style.

years old at the time of Luciano's appointment, found his own artistic origins in this building, and the young Raphael also walked through these perfect arcades. In all probability we should look to Urbino for the origin of two panels, now in museums in Urbino (fig. 14.30) and Baltimore (not illustrated), which show piazzas bordered by palaces and centering around monuments of a more or less classical nature. A number of solutions, none wholly convincing, have been suggested to explain the purpose of these panels. While the execution of the Urbino panel has been attributed to Piero della Francesca or a close follower, the design of both panels has been assigned to Luciano



14.30. LUCIANO LAURANA (design attributed to; perhaps painted by PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA). *View of an Ideal City*. Third quarter of fifteenth century. Panel, 23⅝ × 78¾" (60 × 200 cm). Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino.

Laurana. The best support for this theory is the characters in the very faint, ruined inscriptions at the upper left and right in the Urbino panel, which are Slavic, and probably Old Church Slavonic, written in Cyrillic characters.

As in the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale, the three-story palaces are built on the principle of open framework filled in by screen walls, and the arcaded façades of both palaces at the right terminate, before reaching the corner in order to avoid corner columns. The general feeling of openness in the proportions and spacing is similar to that of the Palazzo Ducale and quite opposed to the tensions of Florentine architecture in general and Giuliano da Sangallo's in particular (see figs. 12.20–12.21). Some of the ideas are unprecedented, such as the rows of pediments crowning some of the palaces, and the entire cityscape clearly represents the kind of civic center that the Early Renaissance wanted to build but could never achieve except on a modest scale at Pienza (see figs. 10.10–10.11). A stable society under autocratic rule was required for the realization of the kind of ideal city shown in the Urbino panel. This had to await the later sixteenth century and found its full fruition only in the Baroque period.

The round building in the center is more perfect in its simplicity than most of the centralized structures built during the Renaissance. The small upper-story windows correspond perfectly to Alberti's desired "temple" illumination (see p. 246). The building was surely intended to represent an Albertian "temple" located at the center of an ideal city and dominating the law court, here represented by the three-aisled basilica at the right, which lacks any religious reference. This representation of an ideal temple may have inspired the Tempietto by Bramante (see fig. 17.9).

Ideal illusionistic architectural perspectives like the Urbino panel are also characteristic of *intarsia*—the panels of inlaid wood used in the Quattrocento and Cinquecento to decorate small rooms and choir stalls. A good example is the *intarsia* decoration of Federico da Montefeltro's study in Urbino (figs. 14.31–14.32), where his manuscripts were kept and where he read, standing, at a desk from which he could look out through marble arches to the blue mountains of his domain. The unknown designer of the *intarsie* may have worked from designs or suggestions by Luciano.



14.31. GIULIANO DA MAIANO. *Studiolo* of Federico da Montefeltro. 1470s. *Intarsia*, height of *intarsia* 7'3" (2.2 m). ᐧᐧ Palazzo Ducale, Urbino. The upper portion of this room was hung with twenty-eight paintings of famous learned men, seen here in reproductions. A similar *intarsia studiolo* made for Federico's palace at Gubbio is now displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

14.32. Detail of fig. 14.31.

called "the finest since antique times" by Vespasiano da Bisticci, the Florentine humanist and bookseller who helped compile the collection. In his *Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, Vespasiano described the duke's commitment to learning:

> We come now to consider in what high esteem the duke held all Greek and Latin writers, sacred as well as secular. He alone had a mind to do what no one had done for a thousand years or more; that is, to create the finest library since ancient times. He spared neither cost nor labor, and when he knew of a fine book, whether in Italy or not, he would send for it. It is now fourteen or more years since he began the library, and he always employed, in Urbino, in Florence and in other places, thirty or forty scribes in his service.... He sought all the known works on history in Latin ... likewise the histories of Greek writers done in Latin, and the orators as well. The Duke also desired to have every work on moral and natural philosophy in Latin, or in Latin translations from the Greek. As to the sacred Doctors in Latin, he had the works of all four.... He had an edition of the Bible made in two most beautiful volumes, illustrated in the finest possible manner and bound in gold brocade with rich silver fittings.... Likewise all the writers on astrology, geometry, arithmetic, and *De re Militari*; books on paintings, sculpture, music and canon law. In medicine all the works of Avicenna, Hippocrates, Galen....
>
> There were all the works of modern writers beginning with Pope Pius; of Petrarch and Dante in Latin and in the vulgar tongue ... also the complete works of Aristotle and Plato; of Homer.... And besides the Holy Scriptures, there are books in Hebrew on medicine, philosophy, and the other faculties.

As in many *intarsia* schemes (see fig. 12.16), the decoration here simulates cabinets and niches; on the lower level, with its latticed compartments, one door appears to be open to show the contents. Above this is a zone of ornaments, including the symbols of the duke, then a framework of pilasters, between which one seems to look into niches with statues; into cabinets containing books, a candle, an hourglass; into a cupboard filled with the duke's armor; and into an architectural perspective with a distant view of mountains and lakes. All this is, of course, immediately recognizable as illusion because of its execution in wood. Federico's study offers a glimpse of how the intellectual refinements of an ideal life could be concentrated within the confines of a tiny chamber, in an exquisite decoration executed with illusionistic skill to please a Renaissance prince.

The *studiolo* housed the most important of approximately 900 manuscripts that made up Federico's library,

Federico's handwritten and illuminated copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (fig. 14.33) has illustrations by Guglielmo Giraldi (active 1445–89). The duke's arms and other symbols and mottoes play a major role in the decorative scheme; note especially the angled arms held by an eagle above the large illustration on the page shown here. In Gothic manuscripts such pages were surrounded by freely drawn leafy patterns, but here the rigor of discipline is evident in the complex knot pattern around the outside of the page and the carefully organized *rinceau* designs of the initial P and the area to the right of the large illustration. The main scene, showing Dante and his guide Virgil meeting with Cato, is framed within a pilastered niche, which is itself enclosed within columns on high pedestals. This sumptuous late fifteenth-century page illustrating an early fourteenth-century text indicates the splendor that was typical of life in the north Italian courts at this time.

ER correr miglior acqua alza le uele
omai la nauicella del mio ingiegno
che lascia dietro a se mar sì crudele
Et cantero di quel secondo regno
doue lhumano spirito si purga
et di salire al ciel diuenta degno
Ma qui la morta poesi risurga
o sancte muse poi che uostro sono
et qui Caliope alquanto surga

14.33. GUGLIELMO GIRALDI. Frontispiece to *Purgatory* from Federico da Montefeltro's manuscript of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. c. 1477–82. Tempera and gold on vellum, 14¾ × 9½" (37.8 × 24.1 cm). Rome, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Urb. Lat. 365, fol. 97. The manuscript was handwritten by Matteo de' Congugi of Volterra, probably in 1477 or early 1478. It was incomplete at the duke's death in 1482. The three small scenes are *Dante Bathing his Hands in the Dew of the Meadow* (lines 121–5), *Virgil Wiping Away the Tears from his Face* (lines 126–29) and *Virgil and Dante on the Shore with the Mountain of Purgatory*. Federico's collection was purchased for the Vatican Library by Pope Alexander VII in 1657.

# Naples

The transition from ruler to ruler in Italian centers of power was often difficult, especially if there was no natural male heir. Although the Spaniard Alfonso of Aragon was adopted in 1421 as the heir of Queen Giovanna II of Naples, who was childless, he was not able to claim his inheritance until 1443. The Neapolitan castle that Alfonso then built to convey his power and control is a traditional fortification of the type developed during the Middle Ages, with five crenellated towers and a surrounding moat. It is the elegant, marble, Renaissance-style triumphal arch (fig. 14.34) that marks the entrance, a signal that this is home to a prince with humanist aspirations, that makes it



14.34. PERE JOAN, PIETRO DA MILANO, and others. Triumphal Arch of King Alfonso of Aragon. 1453–58 and 1465–71. Marble triumphal arch. Castello Aragonese (Castel Nuovo), Naples. Commissioned by King Alfonso I.

exceptional. Alfonso, a student of ancient writings, surrounded himself with learned scholars.

The main narrative scene, above the lower arch, represents Alfonso's triumphal entry into the city in 1443, when a temporary triumphal arch, perhaps similar to this one, was erected. In the carved marble version recording the event, the king is shown elevated on a canopied cart drawn by horses and accompanied by retainers. The motif of paired columns framing an arch on two levels is based on ancient Roman triumphal arches, and the winged victories holding wreaths in the spandrels of the upper arch are drawn from the same source. The style of relief carving also emulates Roman art. The four figures in shell niches near the top are Virtues, suggesting that these are among the personal attributes of the king. Reclining figures in the topmost arch hold cornucopia as a reference to the prosperity Alfonso will bring to the city and region. The culminated figure is Alfonso, who is represented wearing ancient armor. Although the carving is less skillful than we have seen in Florence and elsewhere, the arch communicates the expectation that Alfonso's reign will

bring to Naples a return to the grandeur of the Roman imperial past.

## Luca Signorelli

The final artist to be considered in this chapter might also have been placed somewhat later in the book, but because his style is still largely Quattrocento in effect, he has been included at this point in our discussion. Luca Signorelli (after 1444–1523) was born in Cortona, a Florentine subject town in southern Tuscany. According to Vasari, he was trained initially by Piero della Francesca and later went to Florence, where he worked for many years and was influenced by the works of Antonio del Pollaiuolo in particular. He was called to Rome to complete the cycle of frescoes on the walls of the Sistine Chapel (see pp. 333–34, 369–70), which had apparently been left unfinished by the group of painters assembled by Pope Sixtus IV. He painted for the Medici during the late 1480s and early 1490s, and his *Court of Pan* (fig. 14.35) was influenced by the classicism of the circle surrounding Lorenzo the Magnificent,
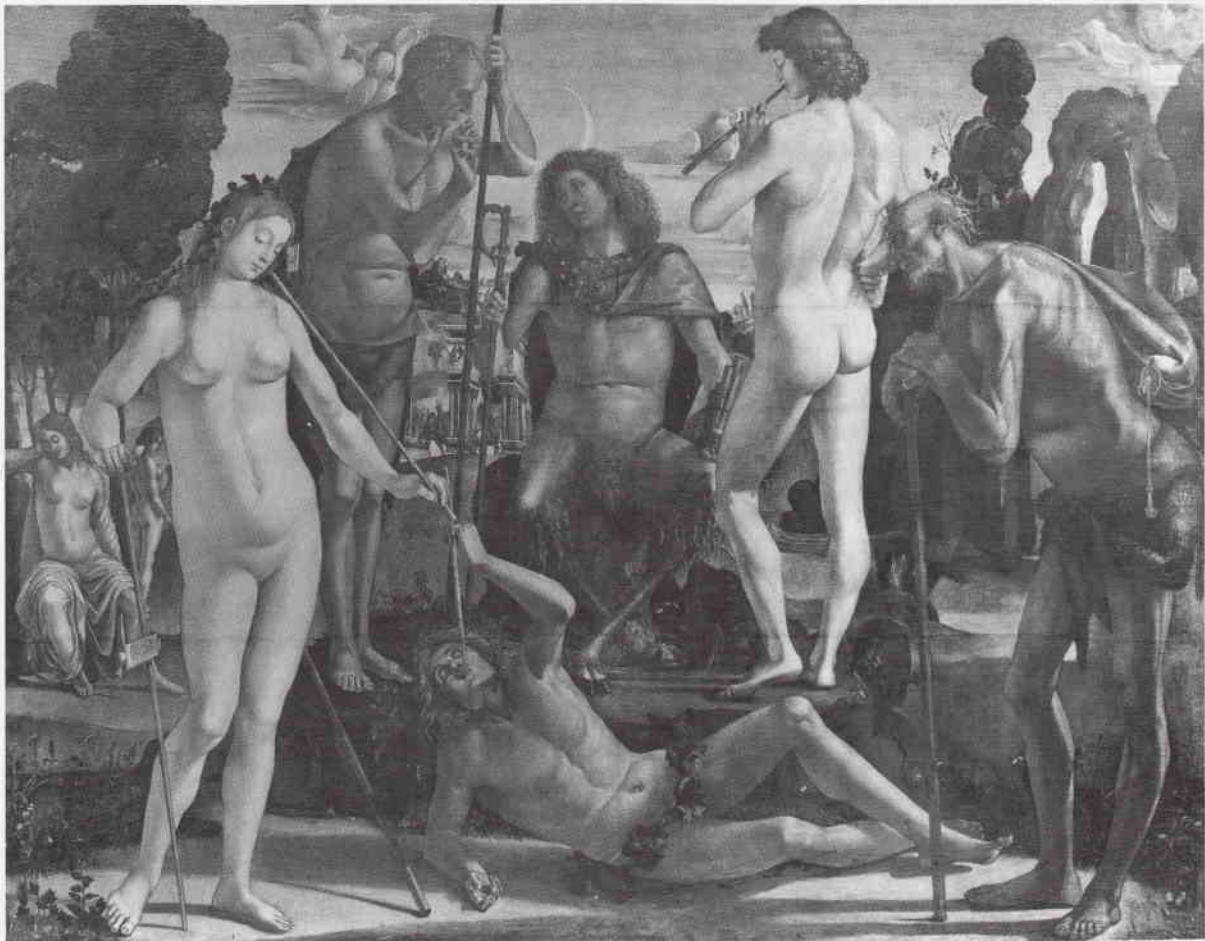


14.35. LUCA SIGNORELLI. *Court of Pan.* c. 1496. Panel, 6'4½" × 8'5" (1.95 × 2.56 m). Formerly Berlin, destroyed 1945. Probably painted for Lorenzo de' Medici.

who greatly revered this sylvan deity. The painting shows Pan instructing a group of largely nude divinities and aged shepherds in the art of music, using flutes cut from reeds. In this re-creation of classical antiquity, the crescent moon hangs over the mythological god's head, and the light of late afternoon models the figures like so many statues in the Medici gardens.

Signorelli's fascination with the human body in motion is demonstrated on a grand scale in the San Brizio Chapel frescoes in the Cathedral of Orvieto, painted from 1499 to 1504 (fig. 14.36). Fra Angelico had begun a fresco cycle illustrating the Last Judgment in the chapel in 1447, but finished only two compartments of the vaults before being called to Rome by Pope Nicholas V. Signorelli was originally employed to finish the vaults; in 1500 he won the assignment to paint the walls as well.

One step into the interior, and we are caught up in a world of terrible action, for here are shown the six episodes of the end of the world. The *Resurrection of the Dead* (fig. 14.37) was the most ambitious nude composition of its day. Responding to the trumpets' call, the nudes, who are so sharply defined that they almost seem to be made of stone or wood, crawl out of the plain before us and strut or dance about, sometimes embracing amiably, sometimes in conversation with skeletons who have yet to get their flesh back. At the top, raised wax nodes that have been gilded catch the light and produce a glittering effect; such nodes were also used by Raphael to create a similar effect in the *Disputà* (see fig. 17.49).

The wildest scene is the *Damned Consigned to Hell* (fig. 14.38). The armored archangels Michael, Raphael, and Uriel guard heaven while demons with bat-like wings carry off protesting mortals through the air. The foreground is filled with a howling tangle of devils and mortals on whom

specific torments are being inflicted. While one woman lies on her stomach, a demon lifts her foot and tears her toes apart. Other demons rip off ears or sink their teeth into their victims. The brilliant coloring enhances Signorelli's wild imagination and rather rude vigor; the tan and white flesh tones themselves are vivid enough, but the skin of the demons often varies from orange to lavender and green on the same figure. Signorelli employed several assistants and, as a result, some details are clumsy, but the effect of the cycle as a whole is beyond anything that had been seen in Italy before, and it is still overwhelming.

One important area of Italy has been neglected while we have been studying the Quattrocento developments in Florence, Rome, Naples, Tuscany and Central Italy. It is now time to turn our attention to the art that was created during the same time period in Venice and Northern Italy.

*Opposite, top:* 14.37. LUCA SIGNORELLI. *Resurrection of the Dead.* 1499–1504. Fresco, width approx. 23' (7 m). S. Brizio Chapel, Cathedral, Oriveto. Commissioned by the Opera of Orvieto Cathedral.
*Opposite, bottom:* 14.38. LUCA SIGNORELLI. *Damned Consigned to Hell.* 1499–1504. Fresco, width approx. 23' (7 m). S. Brizio Chapel, Cathedral, Orvieto.
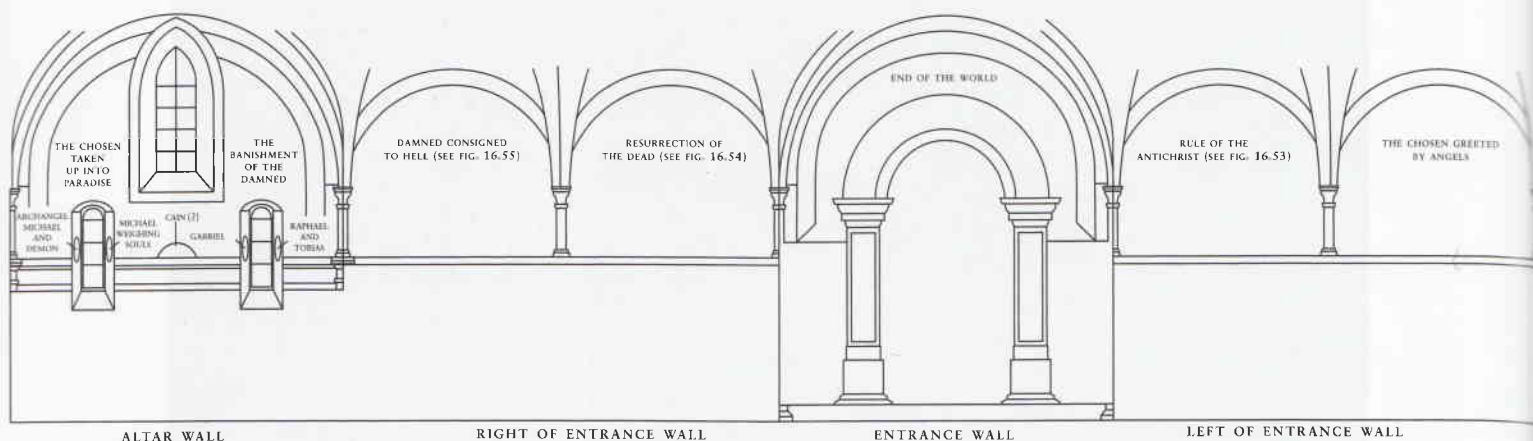


14.36. Iconographic diagram of Luca Signorelli's fresco cycle in the S. Brizio Chapel, Cathedral, Orvieto. Computerized reconstruction by Sarah Cameron Loyd, after Roettgen.

# 15
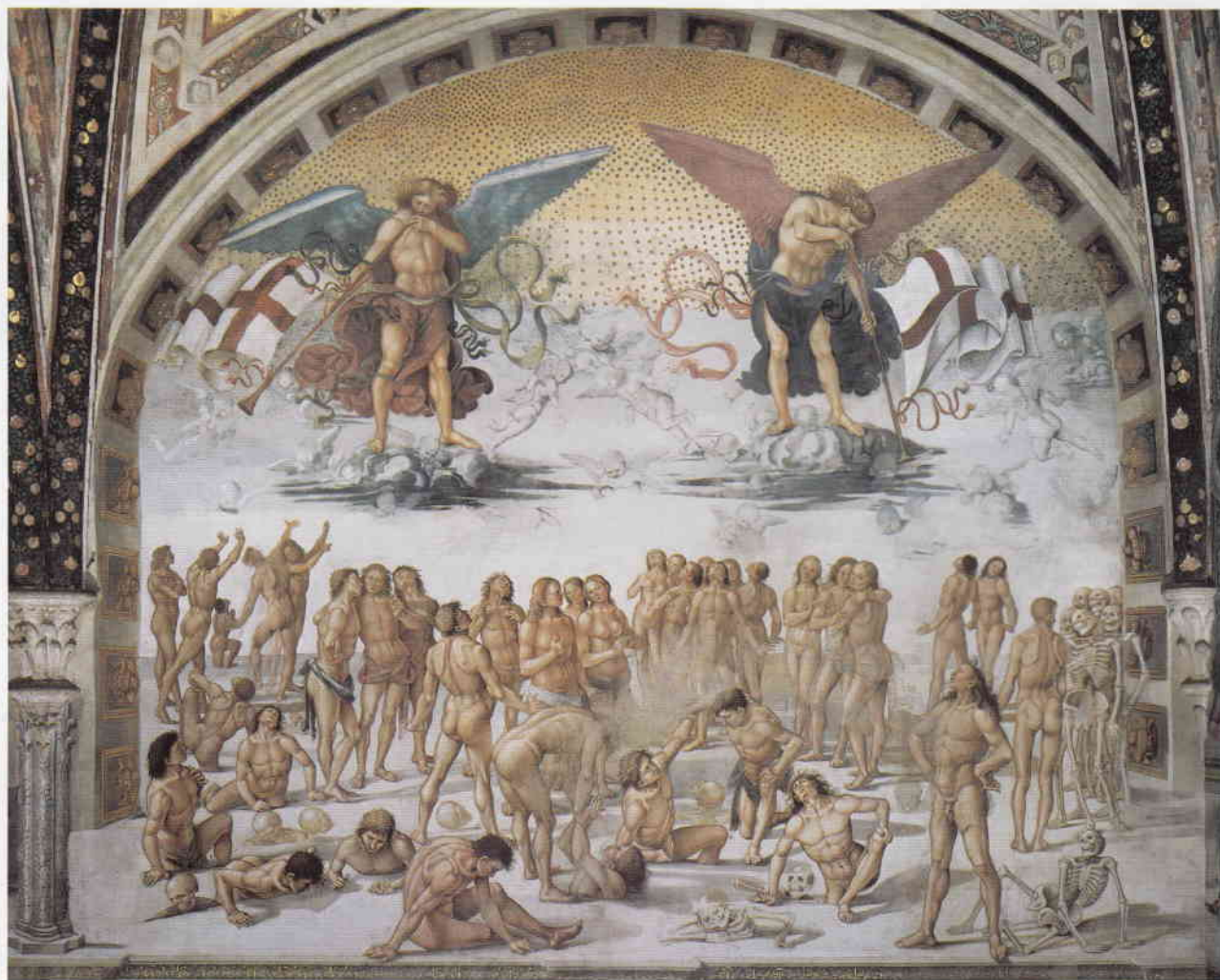
# GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE IN VENICE AND NORTHERN ITALY

The Po Valley—an area that includes the cities of Bergamo, Verona, Vicenza, Cremona, and Pavia—had been transformed politically and socially during the Trecento by the rise of tyrannies (see p. 149). During the Quattrocento these centers were often the scene of flourishing court life and artistic activity. The most splendid of the smaller courts were those at Mantua, under the Gonzaga family, and at Ferrara, ruled by the Este. Milan, under the Visconti dukes and later their relatives the Sforza, became one of the richest and most powerful principalities in Europe, able to attract important and well-known artists.

On the other side of the peninsula, Venice was beginning to turn its attention to the Italian mainland, largely because the loss of its outposts and commerce to the Ottoman Empire forced the city to look toward Europe for trade. Venice began to take control of inland bases—in part to protect new trade routes over the Alps—and Padua, Treviso, Vicenza, and Verona all became subject cities. In 1498 the lion of St. Mark, symbol of Venetian authority, appeared on the ramparts of Bergamo, from which, on clear days, Venetian soldiers could glimpse the Cathedral of Milan. There were conflicts with the French conquerors of Milan at the end of the Quattrocento, and in the early Cinquecento the League of Cambrai, which included every major power in Western Europe, arrayed itself against Venice. The city survived, however, maintaining its land power and much of its maritime empire until 1797, when Napoleon disbanded the republic. Among the smaller northern Italian states, only Mantua and Ferrara

were able to keep their independence throughout the Renaissance, probably because they were buffer states for both Milan and Venice. The flowering of Venetian Renaissance art, as we shall see, dates from the period of Venetian continental expansion.

In the early Quattrocento, Lombard naturalism (see figs. 5.21, 5.24) had a powerful effect when imported to Florence by Gentile da Fabriano (see figs. 8.2–8.4). But in general it was Florentine artists who migrated northward. Paolo Uccello visited Padua and Venice in 1421, as did Fra Filippo Lippi in 1433–34 and Andrea del Castagno in 1442–43, while Donatello was in Padua from the early 1440s to the 1450s. During the Quattrocento, the Renaissance was still largely a Florentine import, and only in the works of Domenico Veneziano (see figs. 11.7–11.11) did Venetian ideas and inventions have any lasting impact on Florentine art. But before the end of the Quattrocento, Venetian painters began to develop a style that would gain for Venice a special importance in the history of painting.

## Pisanello

After Gentile's death, the tradition of northern Italian naturalism was continued in the work of his associate and follower Antonio Pisanello (before 1395–1455). Although from a Pisan family—hence his name—he was born in Verona. As a young man, he worked with Gentile on frescoes in the Doge's Palace in Venice that do not survive. After Gentile's death he continued Gentile's work in Rome. He seems never to have worked in Florence.

*Opposite:* 15.1. GIOVANNI BELLINI. *Enthroned Madonna with Saints* (San Zaccaria altarpiece). 1505. Canvas, transferred from panel, 16'5½" × 7'9" (5 × 2.4 m). 🏛 S. Zaccaria, Venice. The altarpiece was truncated at the top and perhaps at the bottom when it was taken by Napoleon's troops to Paris in 1797. See also fig. 15.44.

*Above:* 15.2. ANTONIO PISANELLO. *St. George and the Princess.* c. 1437–38. Fresco, 7'4" × 20'4" (2.23 × 6.2 m). Pellegrini Chapel, Sant'Anastasia, Verona.
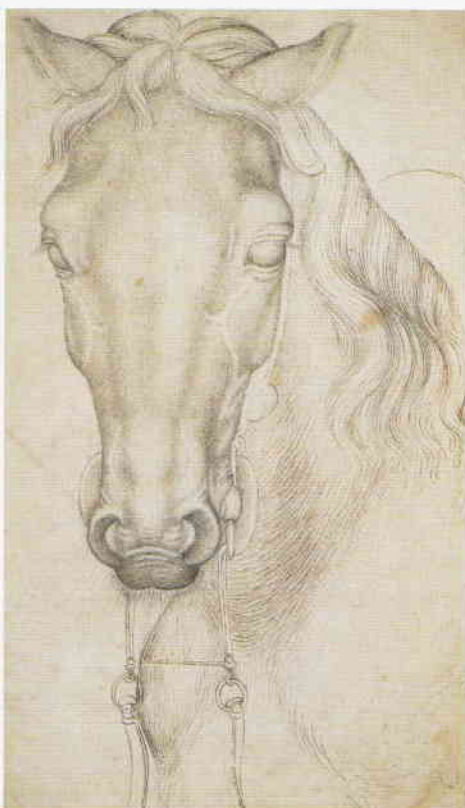


15.3. ANTONIO PISANELLO. *Study of the Head of a Horse.* c. 1437–38. Pen, 10⅞ × 7¾" (27.6 × 19.7 cm). Cabinet des Dessins, the Louvre, Paris.



15.4. ANTONIO PISANELLO. *Study of Hanged Men.* c. 1433. Pen over metalpoint, 11⅛ × 7⅝" (28.3 × 19.4 cm). British Museum, London.

Compared with contemporary Florentine art, or even with Pisanello's northern Italian Trecento predecessors (see fig. 5.19), the fresco of *St. George and the Princess* (fig. 15.2) seems static; people and animals do not even look at each other. But the fresco—or what is left of it, since much of the ornament was painted *a secco* and has peeled away—is a *tour-de-force* of naturalistic detail. Pisanello's animals come out of the Lombard tradition; his sketchbooks record the textures of fur and feathers and the details of animal structure (fig. 15.3); in the finished fresco the hunting dogs and the horses pawing the earth seem more real than the people.

Pisanello's elegantly dressed figures—especially the princess with her towering headdress and sleeves that sweep to the ground—are reminiscent of those in International Gothic style paintings, and can also be related to his watercolor designs for fashionable costumes. In contrast, the low hills and details of the towers, domes, and spires of a northern Italian city reveal Pisanello's interest in representing the real world. At the left are fields and farms and the sea with a ship under sail. Before the city gates two decomposing corpses hang from a gallows, probably an indication of justice in practice (fig. 15.4). The soldiers in the middle distance show Asian facial features observed from the Mongol or Tartar slaves who were not uncommon in Italy at this time.

When the fresco was in good condition, the effect of animals and figures must have been impressive; Pisanello's surviving drawings suggest that they were precisely drawn, beautifully shaded, and convincingly projected in depth.



15.5. ANTONIO PISANELLO. *Vision of St. Eustace.* c. 1440(?). Panel, 21½ × 25¾" (54.5 × 65.5 cm). National Gallery, London. Incised gold leaf is used for the saint's garments, and raised plaster covered with gold decorates the horse's harness, the hunting horn, and the saint's spurs.

Pisanello shows no interest in Florentine perspective, and in this case he made no effort to achieve a unified space. Yet at least one perspective drawing reveals that Pisanello understood the Florentine formula for spatial recession. His surviving works indicate that he was more interested in capturing the variety of the natural world than in subjecting that world to a mathematical formula.

Pisanello's animals take over in a panel that probably represents the *Vision of St. Eustace* (fig. 15.5). While hunting, Eustace was converted to Christianity when a stag appeared with the crucified Christ between his antlers. The legend refers to Psalm 42: "As the hart [deer] panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Eustace, dressed in courtly fashion, responds by lifting one hand in mild astonishment, while his horse responds more strongly, snorting, rearing back, and pawing the ground. There is a second stag at the left, while a third drinks from a stream enjoyed by swans, cranes, and pelicans, one of whom is in flight. A bear inhabits the shadows toward the upper right, and at least three varieties of hunting dog crowd around the saint's horse. One hound sniffs at an offended greyhound, while a second greyhound gives chase to a hare. The forest setting provides a background against which the artist silhouettes the animals and birds. The text planned for the scroll in the foreground was apparently never added; what Pisanello intended—a religious text, a dedication from a patron, his signature—is unknown.

Pisanello is credited with inventing the Renaissance portrait medal. Although Alberti anticipated this in his *Self-Portrait* of about 1435 (see fig. 10.2), it was Pisanello, apparently inspired by ancient Roman coins and the growing Renaissance notion of individual worth, who established the regular form of the medal. This featured a profile figure on the front, some kind of reference to the sitter on the back, and identifying inscriptions and mottoes, as well as the signature of the maker. The type became popular and Pisanello received commissions from patrons in Mantua, Ferrara, Rimini, and Naples, while other artists soon began making medals (see figs. 6.2–6.3, 12.4–12.5).

Pisanello's earliest medal commemorated the court visit of the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus to Ferrara in 1438–39 and was probably produced in 1439–40. Over the course of the next twenty-two years, he made more than two dozen portrait medals. Here we illustrate the first Renaissance medal of a woman, Cecilia Gonzaga (figs. 15.6–15.7), daughter of the marchese of Mantua. Cecilia had learned ancient Greek by the age of seven and became an accomplished classical scholar before entering a convent in 1445. She died six years after the medal was cast. Her virtue is expressed on the back in the form of a partially nude woman who is probably an allegorical rep-



*Above:* 15.6. ANTONIO PISANELLO. *Portrait Medal of Cecilia Gonzaga*, front. 1447. Bronze, diameter 3⅝" (8.7 cm; shown actual size). The Louvre, Paris.

Cecilia was approximately twenty-one when the medal was cast. The patron is unknown, but it was probably one of her relatives, for Pisanello also made portrait medals of Cecilia's father, as well as her grandfather, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, and her tutor, Vittorino da Feltre. The inscription on the front reads "Maiden Cecilia, daughter of Gianfrancesco, first marquess of Mantua."



15.7. ANTONIO PISANELLO. Reverse of fig. 15.6. Pisanello's signature on the stele reads "The work of Pisano the painter, 1447."

resentation of Innocence; it was believed that the unicorn accompanying her could be captured only by a virgin.

## Early Quattrocento Art and Architecture in Venice

When we turn to Venice we need to move back slightly in time, to a period when the dominant style was still that of the International Gothic. In terms of architecture, the most splendid example of the style in Venice is the fantastic Ca d'Oro (House of Gold; fig. 15.8). Protected by their canals, Venetian palaces did not require the fortresslike construction we have seen in other Italian cities. Venetian builders erected the façades of the palaces of the most important families along the main thoroughfare, the Grand Canal, following a system devised as early as the eleventh century. Long rows of large arches and windows opened onto the canal (the plots were deep and the canal façade provided the best opportunity for lighting the interior), while on the lowest story a multiple-arched entrance led from the

gondola landing into a courtyard with a wellhead, stairways, and, perhaps, a small garden. While the Ca d'Oro follows the traditional pattern, it is the brilliant variety of its decoration that makes it the most spectacular Gothic palazzo in the city. On the windows and loggia of the two upper floors, above the simple arches of the entrance, pointed arches with rounded and pointed quatrefoils in stone tracery compete for our attention. The scalloped cusping of the pointed arches sets up a contrapuntal effect, while the tracery patterns of the windows to the right offer additional variations on Gothic motifs. The Venetian sky draws our attention to the top of the building, where a row of exotic pinnacles based on the quatrefoil extend the decoration upward; the balls at the end of each lobe are among the details originally covered in gold leaf. The pale red-and-white stone of the façade was originally enhanced with varnish; when combined with the gilded details that gave the palazzo its name, the effect must have been dazzling.

The International Gothic is also the style practiced by one of the first important Venetian painters of the early Quattrocento, Jacobello del Fiore (d. 1439). He signed the



15.8. GIOVANNI AND BARTOLOMEO BON, MATTEO RAVERTI, ZUAN DA FRANZA, and others. Ca d'Oro (Palazzo Contarini), Venice. 1421–37. Istrian stone and red marble from Verona, with many details originally painted (the colors specified by the owner included ultramarine blue, white, and black) and gilded, hence the name. Commissioned by Marino Contarini.

15.9. JACOBELLO DEL FIORE. *Justice with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel*. 1421. Panels: center, 6'10" × 6'4½" (2.1 × 1.9 m); left, 6'10" × 4'4½" (2 × 1.3 m); right, 6'10" × 5'4" (2 × 1.6 m). Accademia, Venice. Commissioned by the Magistrato del Proprio, the judges concerned with property disputes.

huge triptych representing *Justice with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel* (fig. 15.9) for the Doge's Palace in Venice in 1421. An exuberant Gothic frame encloses an enthroned Justice holding a sword and flanked by lions. Referring to both the throne of the wise Old Testament ruler Solomon and the lion of St. Mark, the lions serve to mark Justice as a particularly Venetian virtue. Some have interpreted the figure as an allegorical representation of Venice, who is often personified as a female figure. In the left wing St. Michael slays a rather inoffensive dragon. To the right Gabriel bears a lily, as if on his way to the Annunciation; his scroll proclaims that he is announcing "the virgin birth of peace among men"—a reference to the idea that the coming of Christ marked a new era of justice in human history.

This unusual surviving example of a civic picture must have been intended for a chamber where judgments and prison sentences were determined or announced. There are lingering elements of Gentile's art, especially in the raised stucco modeling of the gilded portions, but Jacobello here shows little interest in Gentile's naturalism, the flowing Gothic drapery of the figures instead dominating the composition.

In 1444 Antonio Vivarini (c. 1418–1476/84) and his brother-in-law Giovanni d'Alemagna (whose name means "from Germany," d. 1450), who both lived on the island of Murano near Venice, signed and dated a large altarpiece of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 15.10). International Gothic, Byzantine, and Renaissance elements here blend in a strange amalgam. Saints and prophets are seated in tiers



15.10. ANTONIO VIVARINI and GIOVANNI D'ALEMAGNA. *Coronation of the Virgin*. 1444. Panel, 7'6" × 5'9½" (2.3 × 1.8 m). S. Pantaleone, Venice.

as if heaven were the apse of a gigantic church. Rows of angels bring the altarpiece to a domelike top. The entire center of the structure, from the checkered marble pavement to the apex of the animated dome, is filled with a fantastic throne containing Late Gothic motifs and spiral columns—perhaps a reference to the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem—with foliated capitals. Between the columns and around them, infants (probably the Holy Innocents, the babies killed at the command of Herod) carry the symbols of Christ's Passion. On the upper story of the throne, the back of which is formed by angels, God the Father blesses Christ, who crowns his mother, while the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers between them. At the bottom right, St. Luke's doglike bull cuddles beside his master, who exhibits with pride his "portrait" of the Virgin Mary in a Venetian Gothic frame; such examples provide us with rare evidence about how paintings of the time were framed. The painting of the faces and the handling of light and shade suggest that Antonio and Giovanni had studied the works made by Florentine visitors to Venice. The Vivarini family and its pupils represent a conservative current in Venetian painting through two generations and even into the sixteenth century.

## Jacopo Bellini

The family of artists that dominated northern Italian art during the second half of the Quattrocento starts with Jacopo Bellini (c. 1400–1470/71), who had been a pupil and apprentice of Gentile da Fabriano, and includes his two sons, Gentile (1429–1507)—named for his father's master—and Giovanni (c. 1430–1516), as well as his son-in-law Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506).

Jacopo was highly regarded by northern Italian poets and writers of his time. He was working in Ferrara for Lionello d'Este in 1441 but may have been there earlier, for the donor in his *Madonna of Humility with Donor* (fig. 15.11), which is dated about 1430, is probably Lionello. This Virgin of Humility, seated low on a cushion, rises grandly against the sky. The words on her halo, "Hail Mother, Queen of the World," help explain her dominance of the landscape and may also hint at the donor's political aspirations. The tiny scale of the kneeling donor is an archaism that recurs even in the Cinquecento. A semicircle of trees, a deer grazing in their shadow, separates the sacred figures from an ambitious landscape. Jacopo's vision here takes in farms, castles, cities, and the magi on horseback riding toward a shed in which the Holy Family may be dimly seen. The distant mountains are conventional in shape, but the manner in which their summits are touched with light renders them convincing. Even more persuasive is the sky, with its low banks of clouds illumi-



15.11. JACOPO BELLINI. *Madonna of Humility with Donor.* c. 1430. Panel, 23 × 16" (58.4 × 40.6 cm). The Louvre, Paris. Perhaps commissioned by Lionello d'Este.

nated from below by this same light, apparently the last glow of afternoon. The soft, heavy atmosphere common in northern Italy appears here for the first time in painting, but such clouds, with gently glowing undersides, reappear often in the art of Jacopo's son, Giovanni. Jacopo does not seem to be interested in the perspective unity sought by Florentine painters, but his figures are convincingly projected in space, as is the Christ Child's halo. Despite the bulk of the figures, remnants of the International Gothic style survive in the treatment of the Virgin's drapery.

Jacopo's extraordinary imagination is seen in his surviving drawings, made on sheets of parchment or paper, which would not have survived had they not been organized into bound volumes. They were probably intended as model books to be used in his workshop and by his descendants—as indeed they were—and also as a record of his
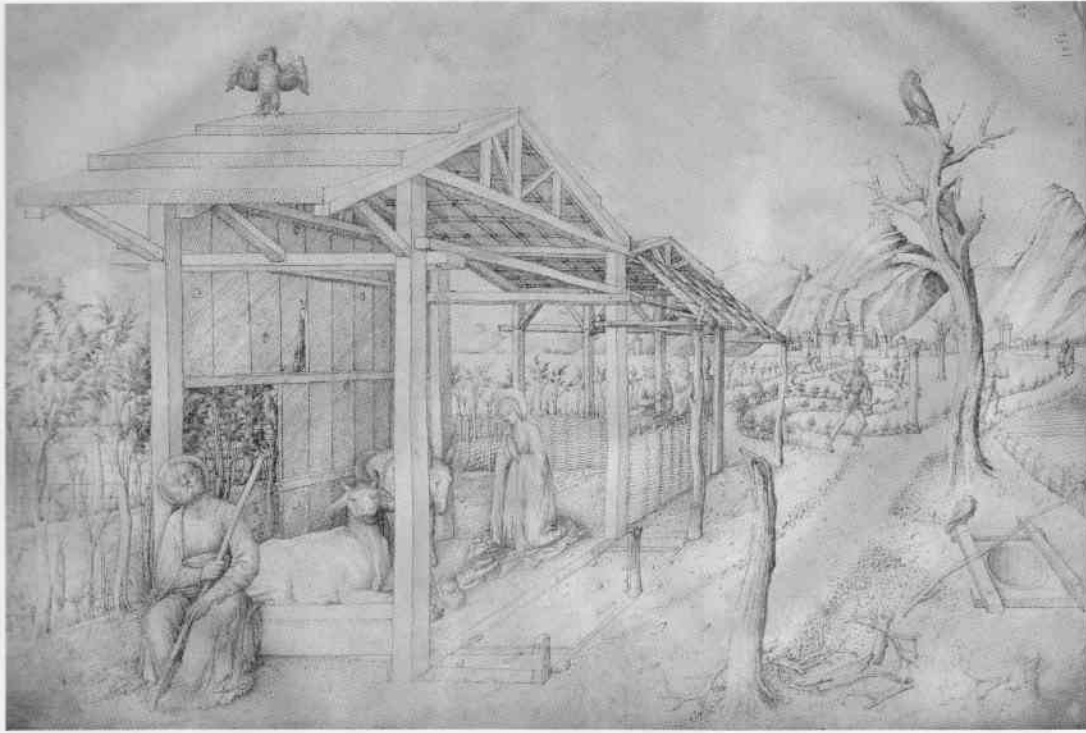
style and attainments. The two books that survive, one of drawings on paper in the British Museum, the other, on parchment, in the Louvre, are datable to about 1450. Their subjects range from the scriptural to the mythological, the archeological and the fantastic. They were inherited by Gentile Bellini, who had his father's rubbed and faded leadpoint drawings in the Paris volume retouched in pen; those in London remain in leadpoint. The books were consulted by Venetian painters, including Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini, until well into the sixteenth century. The drawings make it clear that Jacopo had learned the principles of Albertian perspective without losing his northern Italian interest in a panoramic conception of nature. His strict adherence to perspective occasionally resulted in experiments in rapid recession that would be unlikely to be transferred into paint, but his adoption of the system's single point of view enabled him to keep the horizon in its proper place, to exploit glimpses of distant vistas between foreground objects, and to dissolve the last vestiges of medieval double scale in favor of a single scale that placed human figures in a reasonable relationship to architectural and natural space.

In his *Nativity* (fig. 15.12), for example, Joseph sleeps in the foreground and Mary is reduced to two-thirds his size because she kneels a little deeper into the space. Shepherds and wayfarers continue the diminution systematically to the walls and towers of Bethlehem at the base of the mountains. Jacopo repeats some traditional Byzantine mannerisms of landscape construction, while at the same time leading our eye back to ever smaller hills, castles, and
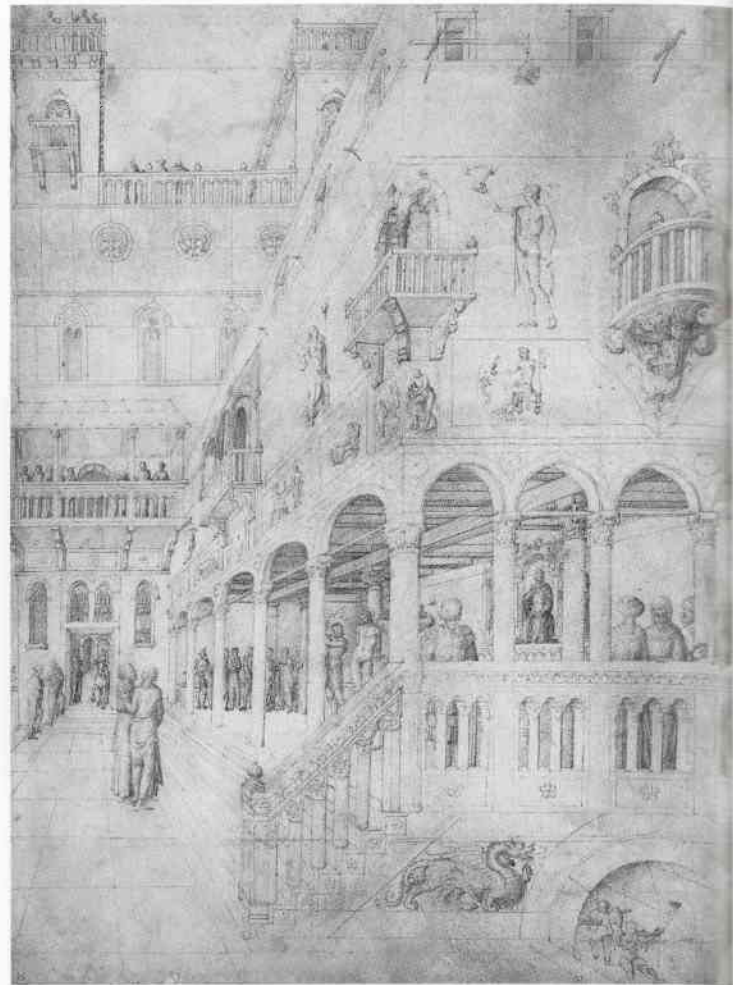


15.13. JACOPO BELLINI. *Flagellation*, from a model book. c. 1450. Leadpoint on parchment, with later pen retouching, $16^3/_4 \times 11^1/_4$" (42.6 × 28.6 cm). The Louvre, Paris.

cities visible between the supports of the shed. Renaissance order has been imposed on the miscellaneous world of northern Italian art, the interest in the variety of nature remaining undiminished.

Jacopo's *Flagellation* (fig. 15.13) is dominated by an enormous Gothic palace, vaguely similar to the Doge's Palace in Venice, with an open loggia, balconies, and classical reliefs and statues. Only after exploring the diverse spaces do we notice Christ, tied to a column in the loggia, and Pilate, who sits in a niche while bystanders look on idly. The figures nearest us, who are irrelevant to the narrative, are, in accordance with perspective, larger than the two protagonists.

In these drawings, Jacopo shows that this is the way even important events happen: not neatly centered and aggrandized, but as part of a universal texture of experience in which many of the characters simply go about their daily lives. Jacopo's daring adoption of Albertian perspective gave him a powerful instrument to demonstrate his views and, moreover, to assert the northern tradition that nature is dominant over humanity.

# Andrea Mantegna

Andrea Mantegna, who married Jacopo Bellini's daughter Nicolosia in 1453, was the leading Quattrocento painter of the northern Italian mainland. Born in 1430 or 1431 near Padua, he was adopted and trained by Francesco Squarcione—painter, collector, art dealer, and entrepreneur—who seems to have employed several talented apprentices whose services he farmed out to prospective patrons. Eventually, Mantegna freed himself from Squarcione, but not without legal difficulties. When the artist was eighteen (so young that his contract had to be signed by his older brother), he was already engaged in painting a fresco series in Padua, working with the Venetian team of Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna and the Paduan Niccolò Pizzolo. Giovanni died in 1450, Vivarini withdrew in 1451, and in 1453 Pizzolo was killed in a quarrel. A new contract in 1454 assigned some of the subjects to Mantegna and others to two minor artists, both of whom withdrew. When Mantegna finished the cycle, sometime before February 1457, he was only twenty-six years old, but the Ovetari frescoes demonstrate that his remarkable new style was already formed.

In the second register above the floor, Mantegna painted two scenes from the life of St. James, the *Baptism of Hermogenes* (fig. 15.14) and *St. James before Herod Agrippa* (fig. 15.15). The two are united by a common perspective scheme, with the vanishing point centered on the frame between them. To enhance the illusion, *putti* are hanging garlands of fruit and flowers around the Ovetari and Capodilista arms, which seem to be suspended in front of the narratives in the actual space of the chapel. In these first mature works, Mantegna demonstrated what he had learned during his training with Squarcione, combined with the compositional designs of his father-in-law, the principles of linear perspective (which were to fascinate him for the rest of his life), and, above all, the style of Donatello as demonstrated in his recently completed reliefs for the nearby church of Sant'Antonio (see figs. 10.25–10.26). The marble pavement on which Hermogenes kneels is continuous with that of the square in front of the throne of Herod Agrippa and forms a perspective grid that establishes the relative sizes of the figures. At this moment not even Piero della Francesca could produce so doctrinaire a demonstration of Albertian perspective.

But this Tuscan rationalism is joined with a northern Italian emphasis on detail. The architecture of classicizing piers and arches, decorated with an apparently invented "classical" relief depicting the familiar Renaissance detail of a foreshortened horse seen from the rear, leads to a potter's shop offering a variety of jars and cups set on a wooden counter. The water striking Hermogenes's bald cranium splashes outward into a fountain of separate drops. A typical detail of Mantegna's attention to realistic detail is the infant at the left, who wants to take part in the ceremony but is restrained by the older boy who leans against the pier. On the right, St. James is brought before Herod Agrippa in front of a Roman triumphal arch that is not a copy of a Roman example but something even more impressive: a re-creation of Roman art in an Albertian manner. Mantegna belonged to a group of humanists in Verona who constituted themselves into an academy, going for boat rides on Lake Garda, reading from classical authors, and making archeological investigations. Mantegna must have made drawings of classical remains that he could use whenever he needed a specific detail.

The atmosphere in these two images is so clear that every element is visible with biting clarity, to the last tree and castle on the farthest hill. The experience of studying Donatello's sculptures seems to have made Mantegna more sculptural in his paintings than even Donatello was in his highly pictorial reliefs. The figures are so sharply modeled by the light—which, like that of Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel (see fig. 8.7), is painted so that it follows the direction of the light entering from the chapel windows—that they almost seem carved in stone. Cloth does not fall over the limbs in masses, as in the paintings of Masaccio and his followers, but clings like the clay-soaked cloth of Donatello's figures (see fig. 7.12).

In the midst of the solemnity of St. James's judgment, Mantegna engages the viewer by the inclusion of unexpected details: the boy who holds the soldier's shield and
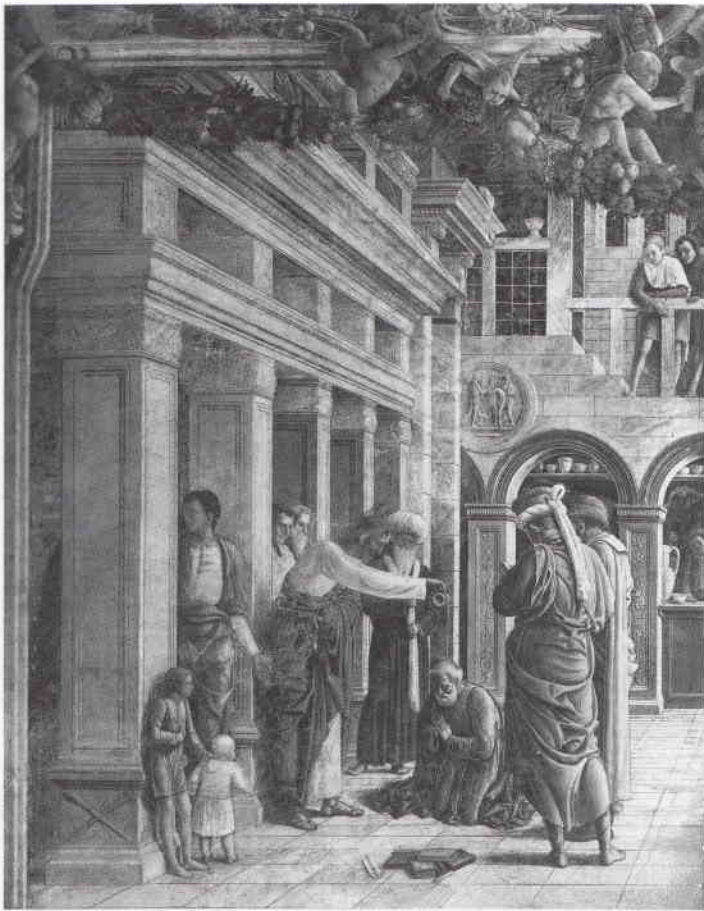
15.14, 15.15. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Baptism of Hermogenes* (left) and *St. James Before Herod Agrippa* (right). 1454–57 (destroyed 1944). Frescoes, width of each 10'9" (3.3 m). Ovetari Chapel, Eremitani Church, Padua.

The frescoes were commissioned with money from the estate of Antonio di Biagio degli Ovetari by his wife, Imperatrice Capodilista, and members of her family. During World War II, American bombs intended for nearby railway yards fell wide of their mark and demolished much of the east end of the church; all our illustrations are from photographs taken prior to the bombing. The fragments that survived in the rubble are now mounted in the rebuilt chapel on photographs of the fragmented frescoes.

wears his enormous helmet looks to the right, for example, while the eyes on the shield look just as sharply to the left; and the sword has been neatly placed parallel to the transversals of the pavement. The representation of the soldier leaning against the frame at the left, with an expression of inner torment, has long been thought to be a self-portrait (fig. 15.16). The face corresponds to the difficult, domineering character we know from documents and resembles the bust in Mantegna's tomb chapel in Mantua.

The lowest register of frescoes of the life of St. James begins just above eye level; we seem to be looking up at an elevated stage (figs. 15.17–15.18). Thus, following perspective theory, we can see no ground plane; the figures move downward as they recede from us. Only the feet of the figures nearest to us can be seen (some even seem to break through the picture plane), while others are cut off by the edge of the stage. In *St. James Led to Execution*, we look up at heads popping out of windows in the buildings
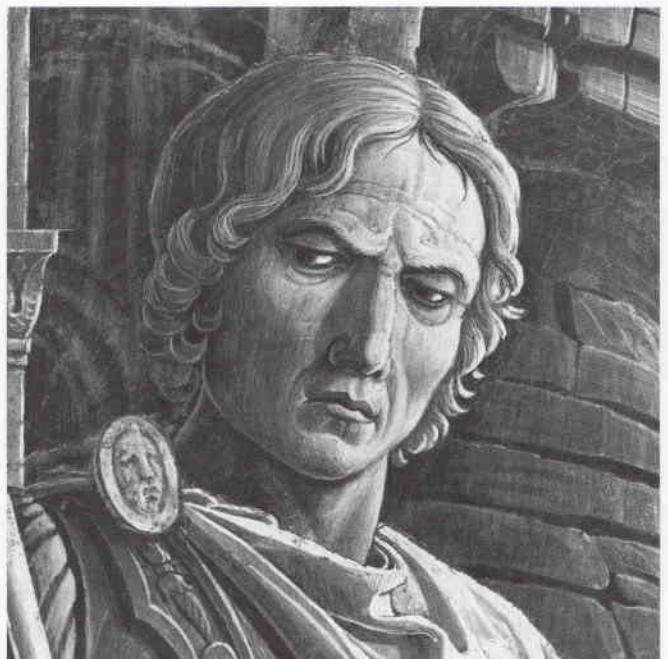


15.16. Self-portrait. Detail of fig. 15.15.
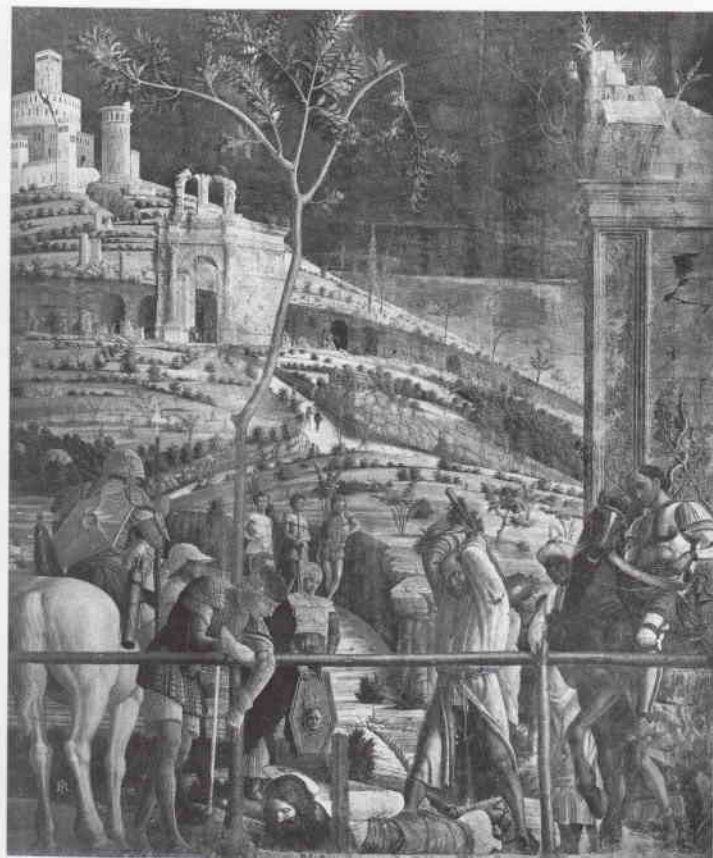
15.17, 15.18. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *St. James Led to Execution* (left) and *Martyrdom of St. James* (right). 1454–57 (destroyed 1944). Frescoes, width of each 10'9" (3.3 m). Ovetari Chapel, Eremitani Church, Padua.

above us, and the realistic effect is further enhanced by the random placing of medieval structures in a curving street, their arches and battlements rendered with the same attention to detail as the classical elements. The coffering of the arched gateway is also seen from below. But a moment's reflection will disclose that if Mantegna had been consistent, he would also have made the verticals converge as they rise, in conformity to our viewpoint below. That he did not do this is doubtless due to his unwillingness to violate the verticality of the wall on which he was painting and, in consequence, the architectural structure of the chapel itself.

Here again Mantegna captured many facets of the human experience, setting each into its correct relationship in space. A penitent breaks from the crowd to receive the blessing of the saint, for example, while a soldier uses a staff to hold back a woman who wishes to follow. Mantegna's sense of form invests humble faces with majesty, and the sad countenance of the saint has the same lapidary clarity as the masonry blocks in the buildings.

The *Martyrdom of St. James* depicts the saint's beheading. St. James lies prone, foreshortened in depth, under a blade that will slide down in channels between two posts. An executioner is about to strike the blade with a gigantic

mallet; when the blow falls, it seems that the severed head will roll out into the chapel. Although this is difficult to see in photographs, the illusion is increased by the rail of the sapling fence, painted so that it seems to overlap the painted frame, and by the soldier who leans forward over it. A powerful tension in depth is established by the rise of the hill, its ancient ruins illuminated against the sky, to a castle on the hilltop. As we wait for the blow to fall, we note that a bough has snapped at the top of the tree in the foreground, the executioner's sleeve is at this very moment ripping with the strain, and a gigantic crack cuts through the castle keep from the top almost to the foundation. The contrast between this tension and the calm of the soldiers idly watching the execution encourages the observer to identify with the event through suspense and apprehension. That we look up into the saint's face as he is about to die renders our apprehension almost unbearable.

Mantegna's first major altarpiece is still in its original position on the high altar of the huge Romanesque church of San Zeno in Verona (figs. 15.19–15.20). Often characterized as a pictorial version of Donatello's lost altarpiece for Sant'Antonio in Padua (see p. 258), the altarpiece may well reflect some of the sculptor's architectural and figural arrangements. The wooden frame has been transformed

15.19. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints* (San Zeno altarpiece). 1456–59. Panel, height 7'2½" (2.2 m).
🏛 S. Zeno, Verona. Commissioned by Gregorio Correr. The frame is original, but it has lost whatever decoration was placed in the center of the pediment. The predella panels shown here are copies; the originals were taken by Napoleon and are now in French museums (see fig. 15.21).

into a carved and gilded façade, its pediment and entablature supported by four columns that seem to be attached to painted piers. Together the real half-columns and painted piers seem to form one side of a square loggia defined by piers within the painting. In the center of this loggia, the Virgin sits on a classicizing marble throne. To the sides, eight saints, meditating or conversing, diminish in size as they recede from us. The brilliant colors of their robes stand out against the veined marble of the painted architecture, the blue sky, and Mantegna's icy white clouds. Garlands of fruits and flowers, a rosary, and an egg symbolizing the Virgin Birth, as in Piero's *Madonna and Child* (see fig. 11.30), hang between the columns and piers; a burning oil lamp is suspended from the egg. Around and below the throne, *putti* sing or strum on lutes. The manner in which the Asian rug below the Virgin's feet conceals the sculpted *putti* of the pedestal is a surprisingly witty touch; we want to lift the rug to examine the rest of Mantegna's invention.

The brightness of the colors and gold, the powerful architectural masses, the sharp definition of the forms, and



15.20. Detail of fig. 15.19.

the consistency of the spatial formulation combine to create an illusion of reality that must have been overpowering at the time. This is an important reminder for today's viewers, who study the work as a painting and, accustomed to photography, television, and computers, are perhaps immune to some of the effects of visual reality achieved by Mantegna. We have seen framing used to similar illusionistic effect in Pietro Lorenzetti's *Birth of the Virgin* (see fig. 4.26), but most likely Mantegna had no knowledge of that picture. A grand tradition of north Italian illusionistic altarpieces starts from Mantegna's formulation here at San Zeno and continues into the Cinquecento, as we shall see.

The tragic emotion expressed in the *Crucifixion* from the predella (fig. 15.21) is so intense that in reproduction it could be a monumental fresco rather than a small panel. Golgotha—the place of the skull—is a rounded, skull-shaped stone outcropping. The mundane details of how the three crosses are set in holes in the rock and held in place by wedges and boulders are typical of Mantegna's interest in the facts of everyday life. The ascending road, behind the cross of Christ, is filled with crowds returning from the spectacle of the Crucifixion. The crosses of the thieves are turned inward and, following northern Italian tradition, the thieves are tied to their crosses rather than nailed. The cross of Christ is placed so that his toes, deprived of the usual footrest, match the junction point between two distant hills, and his body is silhouetted against the sky. His arms stretched wide create a gesture of suffering; the lines of the arms and turn of the head reflect the horizontal clouds in the cold sky. The tragic contrasts of the scene—the suffering women, whose haloes dissolve into soft-edged, gold clouds, the indifferent soldiers, and the beauty of the landscape and cityscape—make this small picture one of the most memorable of the numerous Crucifixions in Italian art.

In the *Agony in the Garden* (fig. 15.22), Mantegna repeats the sharply defined sculptured forms, the enameled brilliance of color, and the clarity of atmosphere of the San Zeno altarpiece. The composition derives from a Jacopo Bellini drawing, even to the ominous bird perched on a dead branch, but the rock masses and human forms have been subjected to Mantegna's passion for definition. As in all Mantegna's early works, every stone, mountain, and rabbit in the road are projected with flawless precision. His Jerusalem is a mixture of the northern Italian cities he
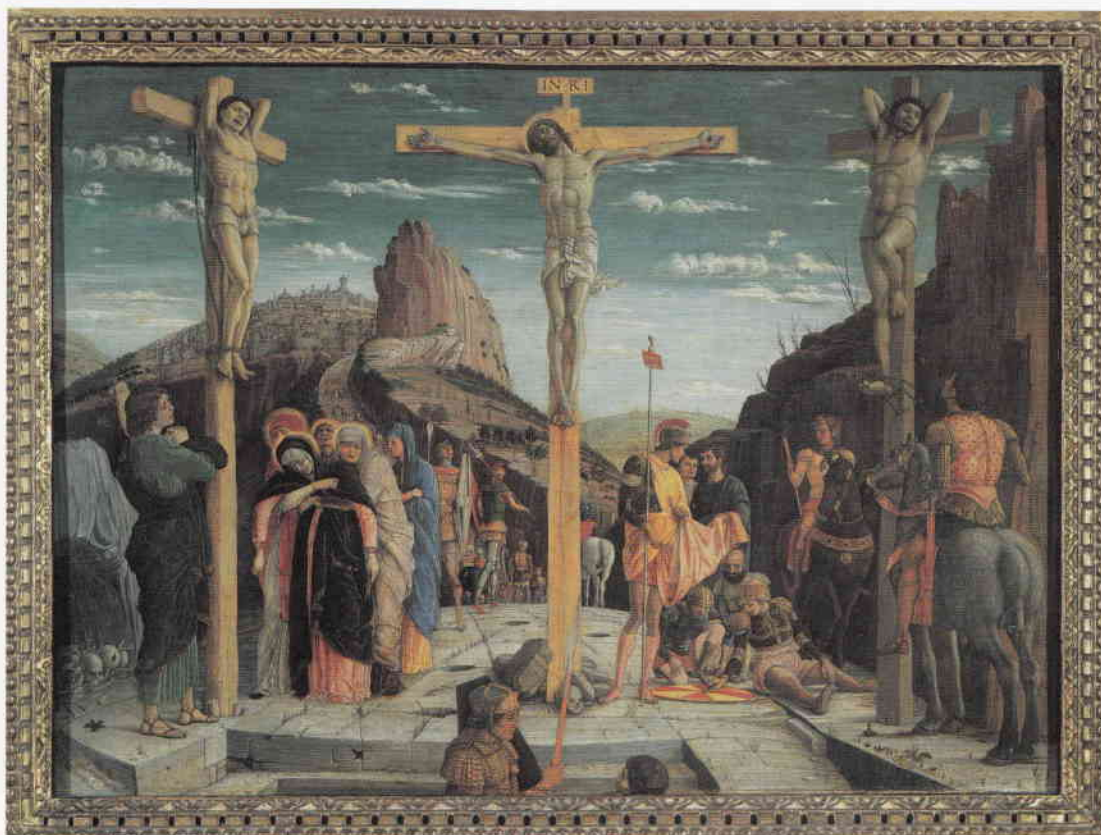


15.21. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Crucifixion*, from the predella of the San Zeno altarpiece (see fig. 15.19). 1456–59. Panel, 26 × 35⅛" (66 × 89.2 cm). The Louvre, Paris.

15.22. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Agony in the Garden.* c. 1460. Panel, 24¾ × 31½" (62.9 × 80 cm). National Gallery, London.
This painting may have been made for private devotional use, a function for which this iconography is appropriate. Mantegna's
signature is inscribed, in Latin, on the rocks.

had seen and of Rome, which he knew only from drawings and descriptions. Mantegna's Christ confronts a row of child-angels holding symbols of the Passion. The striking foreshortening of one of the sleeping apostles may have been suggested by a work of Paolo Uccello, now lost, that Mantegna had seen in Padua or Venice. Down the road, in the middle distance, Judas is bringing the Roman soldiers to arrest Christ.

After years of negotiation, in 1459 Mantegna went to Mantua as official painter to the court of Marquis Ludovico Gonzaga. He worked there for nearly half a century, becoming one of the first princely artists of the Renaissance, painting altarpieces and frescoes for churches, chapels, and palaces, designing pageants, painting allegorical pictures, and performing the many official tasks required of a court artist.

Mantegna's *Foreshortened Christ* (fig. 15.23) shows an interest in foreshortening that probably stems from the artist's trips to Florence in 1466 and 1467, when he would first have seen numerous examples of Florentine art. He must have been impressed by the art of Castagno (whose earlier works he had been able to study in Venice), especially the *Vision of St. Jerome* in Santissima Annunziata



15.23. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Foreshortened Christ.* After
1466. Canvas, 26¾ × 31⅞" (68 × 81 cm). Brera Gallery, Milan.
The painting was in Mantegna's house at the time of his death.
In the inventory made at that time it was called *Cristo in Scurto*
(*Foreshortened Christ*).

(see fig. 11.17) and a *Death of the Virgin*, destroyed in the seventeenth century but in Mantegna's time in Sant'Egidio, which showed the dead Virgin feet foremost. The *Foreshortened Christ* is painted on canvas and, therefore, may have been intended as a processional banner for a society or confraternity dedicated to the Corpus Christi (the mystical adoration of the body of Christ). Alternatively, it may have served as a private devotional image, perhaps for Mantegna himself, given that it was in his possession when he died. It shows the body of Christ lying on a marble slab with a cloth over his legs and his head raised on a pillow. In the Quattrocento, the death of Christ was frequently a focus for personal meditation; the fifteenth-century German mystic Thomas à Kempis, in his *Imitation of Christ*, urged readers to "dwell in the wounds of Christ." Mantegna asks his observers to do the same, his sculptural style giving the body and wounds convincing three-dimensionality. The perspective seems to catapult the body out of the frame and even, we might say, into a willing observer's inner life. Nor can the viewer escape, since Christ's feet,

projected from our point of view, follow us wherever we stand in the gallery, and the wounds always lie open to our gaze.

If you compare Mantegna's depiction with a real figure seen from this sharply angled viewpoint, you will note that the head of Mantegna's Christ is unnaturally large and his feet unrealistically small, but you will also immediately understand that a painting that captured these real proportions would look ludicrous—gigantic feet would overwhelm a tiny, distant head. Mantegna instead painted a figure that we recognize immediately and in which we do not sense any inherent disproportion, at least at first glance. Here the Renaissance enthusiasm for foreshortening becomes a catalyst for emotional expression.

Mantegna's interest in foreshortening also played a role in the Camera picta ("painted chamber") that he frescoed for Ludovico Gonzaga and his family in one of the towers of their castle (figs. 15.24–15.25). Over the fireplace Mantegna painted the marquis and the marchioness, Barbara von Hohenzollern, with their children, courtiers, and favorite
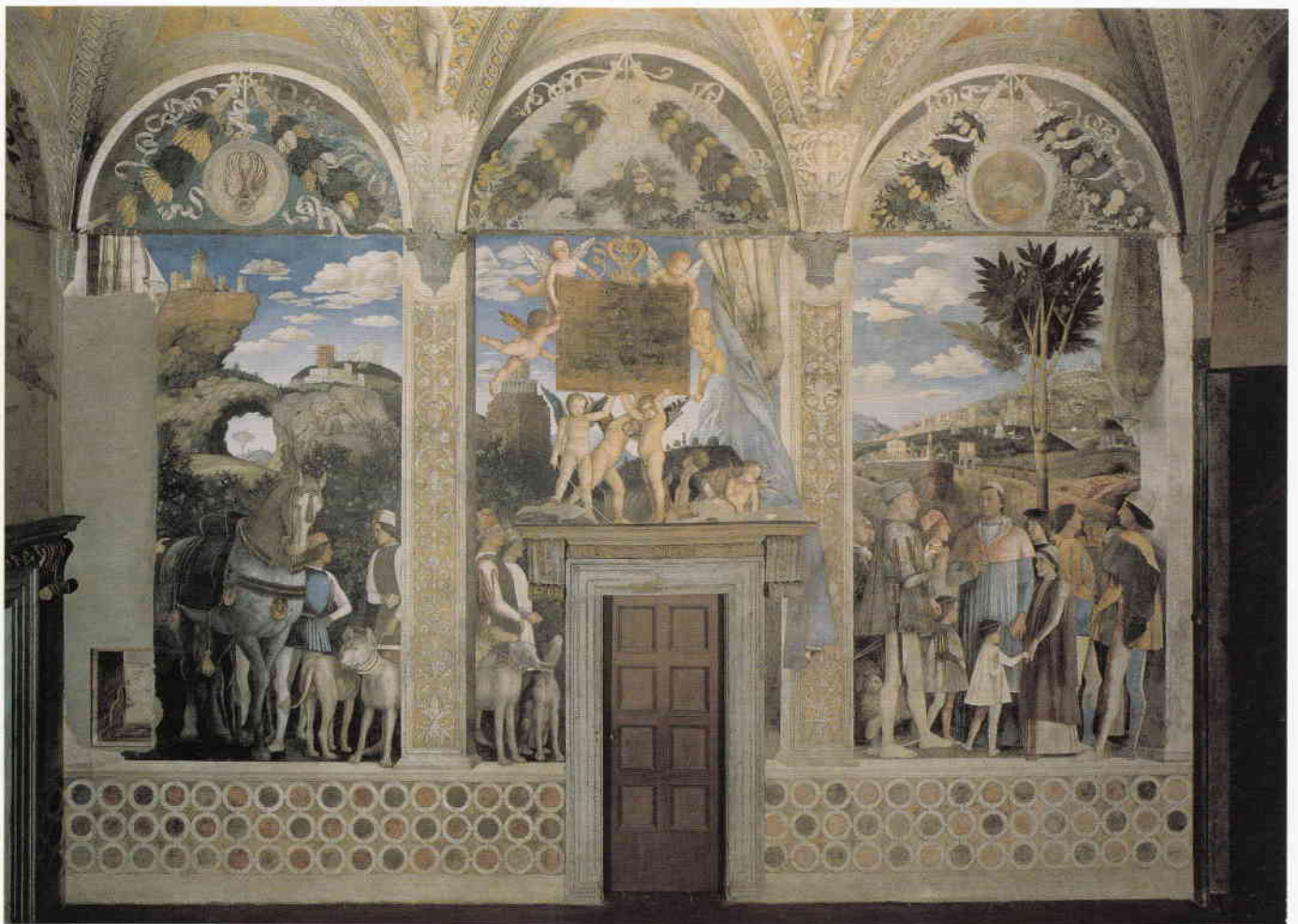


15.24. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Arrival of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga.* Completed 1465–74. Fresco. Camera picta, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua.

dwarf. The parapet of the terrace where they are gathered is formed of linked circles of white marble filled with disks of veined marble—a motif that serves as a unifying element throughout the frescoes of the room. To activate the scene Mantegna showed a messenger who has brought the marquis a letter and listens intently to the response. The figure grouping creates an effect of natural spontaneity. Portraits are rendered with Mantegna's customary precision, but his style has changed since his earliest work. Now

the forms are less sculptural, and the color is gentler and softer, without the harshness of the Ovetari frescoes or the brilliant contrasts of the San Zeno altarpiece.

The paintings are continuous on two of the four walls and across the vaulted ceiling. The scene taking place in the right section of the adjoining wall (see fig. 15.24) has not been identified with any known event and may be symbolic. At the left stands Ludovico, at the right his older son and successor, Federico, and in the center his second son,



15.25. ANDREA MANTEGNA. Fresco cycle. Completed 1465–74. Walnut oil on plaster; size of room 26'6" × 26'6" (8 × 8 m). Camera picta, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua. Commissioned by Ludovico Gonzaga. Ludovico Gonzaga, his family, and court are visible at the right. The painted date 1465 that marks the beginning of work on the room looks as though it is scratched into the plaster, and thus it makes a clever *trompe l'oeil* effect. Mantegna's self-portrait, perhaps functioning as a kind of signature, is hidden in the foliate decoration on the painted pilasters. In 1475 an ambassador wrote to Milan calling the Camera picta "the most beautiful room in the world."

15.26. ANDREA MANTEGNA. Ceiling fresco. 1465–74. Diameter 8'9" (2.7 m). Camera picta, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua. See also fig. 15.25.

Cardinal Francesco, who in 1472 was made titular head of the church of Sant'Andrea in Mantua (see figs. 10.7–10.9). The background, perhaps meant to represent Rome, has Roman ruins and statues outside its walls and a castle above. In spite of losses, the glowing color is one of the chief delights of the room. There is, however, a considerable difference in color between the ceiling, painted in fresco, and the walls, which Mantegna carried out with a vehicle that has been identified as walnut oil.

The frescoes on the vaulted ceiling create the illusion of marble relief sculpture and gold mosaic. In the center, unexpectedly, we seem to be looking straight up through a cylindrical opening in this decoration, past a parapet that matches the one in the group portrait, and out to the sky (fig. 15.26). Foreshortened *putti* stand inside the rim, while others poke their faces through what appear to be openings, and laughing servants look over the edge at us. As a final prank, Mantegna's illusion includes a heavy tub

of plants perched precariously on the rim of the parapet and supported by a pole that seems ready to roll away at any moment.

In 1488 Mantegna made his first trip to Rome, where he was able to study large numbers of classical antiquities, as well as the frescoes painted for Sixtus IV in the Sistine Chapel (see figs. 13.19, 14.16–14.18). From 1489 to 1490 he painted a chapel for Pope Innocent VIII, which was destroyed in 1780 to make way for a new wing of the Vatican Museums.

Mantegna's late style, after his sojourn in Rome, is represented by the *Madonna of the Victory* (fig. 15.27). The painting was carried through the streets after a military victory, which explains why it was painted on canvas instead of wood, the medium used consistently for paintings at this time. Two military saints, Michael and George, and Andrew and Longinus, patron saints of Sant'Andrea in Mantua, accompany the armored Gonzaga marquis.

15.27. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Madonna of the Victory*. 1495–96. Tempera on canvas, 9'2" × 5'10" (2.8 × 1.8 m). The Louvre, Paris. Commissioned by Marchese Francesco II Gonzaga of Mantua to celebrate his victory over King Charles VIII of France and the French armies at the Battle of Fornovo, July 6, 1495. Francesco later wrote that in the thick of battle we "sought refuge with our whole mind in the most certain protection of Mary, spotless Mother of God. As soon as we had implored it, our courage was raised, our strength was renewed, and … our own enemies … began to flee."

Kneeling next to the infant John the Baptist at the right is an old woman, probably St. John's mother, Elizabeth. On the pedestal a simulated relief shows the Temptation of Adam and Eve, from whose sin Christ and the Virgin have redeemed humanity. The figures are enclosed in a bower of orange trees framed by a carved wooden arch with palmette decoration. From the apex of the bower an elaborate branch of rose-colored coral—efficacious in warding off demons and the evil eye—hangs from an early form of the rosary composed of coral and crystal beads. In the openings of the bower, parrots and cockatoos add more brilliant touches of color to this sumptuous work.

*Bacchanal with a Wine Vat* (fig. 15.28) suggests the influence of Antonio del Pollaiuolo's *Battle of the Nudes* (see fig. 13.5) in the emphasis on large figures in the foreground and in certain technical details. Mantegna's recreation of an ancient wine-making festival seems to have been based on Roman bacchic sarcophagi; note the central figure, who is out cold, and the two *putti* passed out in front of the vat, their little cup abandoned by their feet.

15.28. MANTEGNA. *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*. c. 1475. Engraving and drypoint, 12¾ × 17¹³⁄₁₆" (32.4 × 45.2 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1924 (24.8.3).
The plaque hanging on the grapevine above the vat may have been intended for the artist's signature or for the date. Mantegna's prints were produced in small editions and only a few copies of each survive.

The god of wine, Bacchus, supports a cornucopia and is being crowned with grapes (for Michelangelo's later sculpture of the crowned Bacchus, see fig. 16.36). Mantegna's art in general is scholarly and restrained but this ancient theme seems to have encouraged his personal exploration of its witty and even somewhat bawdy possibilities. In his technique here Mantegna was experimental, using a drypoint needle to produce various amounts of burr to achieve subtle effects of light and definition. The weak definition of certain lines in early examples of this print indicates that Mantegna had technical difficulties; he seems to have had trouble inking the plates, and, because no roller press was apparently available, problems transferring the ink from plate to moistened paper. Mantegna's and Pollaiuolo's prints reveal the earliest, experimental stages in the development of the engraving technique in Italy.

## Mantegna and Isabella d'Este

When Isabella d'Este, daughter of Ercole I, duke of Ferrara, married Francesco Gonzaga in 1490, she became Marchesa of Mantua and established herself as one of the foremost patrons and collectors of art of the Renaissance. Isabella's portrait is known in several examples, including a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci and a painting by Titian. Here we reproduce her personal gold version of the portrait medal she commissioned (fig. 15.29); she presented bronze versions to important individuals, following a tradition in the north Italian courts that developed after the first medals were created by Pisanello (see figs. 15.6–15.7).

Approximately twenty thousand of Isabella's letters have been preserved as well as sixty thousand letters she received. This voluminous documentation offers a rich record of her life, collections, and patronage of scholars and artists, who included Giovanni Bellini, Mantegna, Lorenzo Costa, Leonardo, Perugino, Francesco Francia, and Correggio. While many patrons developed a preference for a single artist or a single style, Isabella's artistic taste evolved over time, from the Quattrocento styles of Costa and Perugino to the High Renaissance styles of Leonardo and Correggio.



15.29. GIANCRISTOFORO ROMANO. *Portrait Medal of Isabella d'Este.* Cast 1498; mounted c. 1507. Cast and chased gold, with diamonds and enamel, diameter of medal 2⅝" (6.7 cm; shown actual size). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Münzkabinett. Medals such as this one were commissioned by Renaissance rulers and others to be given as tokens of honor and respect. Isabella presented bronze and lead versions of this medal to scholars and poets, and the text on the back reads "For Those Who Serve Her." This bejeweled example cast in gold is the one she exhibited, paired with an ancient cameo with profile portraits of the Emperor Augustus and his wife Livia, in the room she called her *grotta*.

One of the humanists at Isabella's court called her "The Tenth Muse." Many Renaissance women were accomplished musicians, but Isabella was unusual in that she learned to play both plucked and bowed instruments, and documents reveal that she commissioned new instruments for the musicians who played at the Mantuan court. In addition she raised seven children and frequently had to run the Mantuan state when her husband was away or in prison. After his death in 1519 she remained active in affairs of state until her own death, twenty years later.

Isabella came from an art-loving family and her sister and brother were both patrons (see figs. 19.13–19.14). That Isabella was not only a patron but also a collector is surprising, for this activity was limited almost exclusively to men at this time. She wrote that she had an "insatiable desire for antiquities," and paired a *Sleeping Cupid* said to be by the famous ancient Greek sculptor Praxiteles with a sculpture of the same subject by Michelangelo; unfortunately both works are now lost. When she could not obtain the original, she would commission a reproduction; one of her treasures was a small bronze version of the *Apollo Belvedere*, the original being out of reach because it was in the papal collection (see fig. 1.5). The Gonzaga inventories disclose that her collection included paintings, classical gems, coins, medals, precious and semiprecious stones, vases, manuscripts, gold and silver work, and other rarities. In addition, she had an important collection of books. She did all this, and commissioned paintings from major artists, on a limited budget.

Isabella was conscious of quality, and when she wanted a set of majolica plates and bowls, she turned to one of the most famous of majolica painters, Nicola da Urbino (active 1520–1537/8). Her coat of arms is prominently featured on the pieces (fig. 15.30); in the example illustrated it is centered while the arms of her husband are suspended from a tree on the left. Most of the surviving pieces feature scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Nicola's source for several of these was a set of woodcuts for an Italian version of Ovid's tales published in Venice in 1497. The scenes shown here center around the moment when Daphne turns into a laurel tree to escape the advances of Apollo (for Pollaiuolo's painted version of this theme, see fig. 13.8). The scenes of Cupid kindling Apollo's love for Daphne at the top, and, at the left, Apollo with the python he killed, are all inspired by the 1497 woodcuts. The river god at the bottom, however, who is Peneus, Daphne's father, to whom she prayed to be saved from Apollo, was based on an ancient sculpture of a reclining figure in Rome. Themes of love were popular with Isabella, and it is likely that she dictated her choice of subjects to Nicola.

Isabella was a demanding patron, but probably no more so than many male patrons of this period. In commission-ing a painting from Perugino she outlined the subject and its complex symbolism and even provided him with a small drawing to follow as he developed the composition. She took great pleasure in her *studiolo* and *grotta*, the two chambers in the Gonzaga castle at Mantua that she had decorated; they were not far from Mantegna's paintings in the Camera picta, commissioned by her husband's grandfather, Ludovico. In the *studiolo* she kept her library and collections in carved and gilded wooden cabinets. The ceiling was gilded and decorated with Isabella's private mottoes and emblems, and the walls were filled with paintings, including two by Mantegna. The themes for these *studiolo* paintings were probably devised by the Mantuan poet Paride da Ceresara and the Venetian writer Pietro Bembo. The role played by these humanists is a reminder that many of the works created in this period should be seen as collaborations between enlightened patron, humanist iconographer(s), and creative artist(s). Who played the lead role probably varied from commission to commission, but the input of the patron, who was paying for the work, was unlikely to be ignored.



15.30. NICOLA DA URBINO. Broad-rimmed bowl with scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the coat of arms of Isabella d'Este. c. 1525. Majolica, height 10⅝" (27.1 cm). London, British Museum. Presumably commissioned by Isabella d'Este.
The motto on the scroll below Isabella's arms is "Without hope and without fear." This bowl was part of a service that was Nicola's most prestigious commission. In the next decade he made services for Isabella's son, Federico Gonzaga, 1st Duke of Mantua, and his wife, Margherita Paleologo.

One of the paintings commissioned for Isabella's *studiolo* is Mantegna's *Parnassus* (fig. 15.31), in which Mars embraces Venus in front of a bed perched on a natural bridge. Cupid blows a dart toward Vulcan, Venus' husband, who menaces the couple from a cavern illuminated by the glow from his forge. In front of the bridge, Apollo plays music on his lyre for a dance performed by the Muses, while Mercury at the right leans gently against the winged horse Pegasus. It is a classicizing fantasy, full of complex patterns of line and form and the muted colors of Mantegna's late style. Replete with references to the ancient sculpture that Mantegna had studied, the painting probably celebrated the wedding of Francesco and Isabella on February 11, 1490, when the planets Mercury, Mars, and Venus all stood within the sign of Aquarius, as did the westernmost bright star of the constellation Pegasus. Mars and Venus have been interpreted as references to Francesco

and Isabella. Such self-referencing was to be expected in the rarified setting of the Italian courts; also in Isabella's *studiolo* was Lorenzo Costa's *Garden of the Peaceful Arts*, an allegory of the court at Mantua with Isabella being crowned by Cupid, and Mantegna's *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, in which Pallas is an allegorical representation of Isabella. The colors of Mars' garments, Venus' scarf, and the coverings of the bed in the *Parnassus* are the mingled colors of the Este and Gonzaga families. The painting, its elements doubtless specified by Isabella, was, then, clearly an allegory of marital harmony, under which the arts, led by music, would flourish.

Mantegna's death in 1506 was felt as a personal tragedy by the Gonzaga family, for whom he had worked for nearly half a century. His fame was international; the German artist Albrecht Dürer was on his way to visit Mantegna when death intervened.
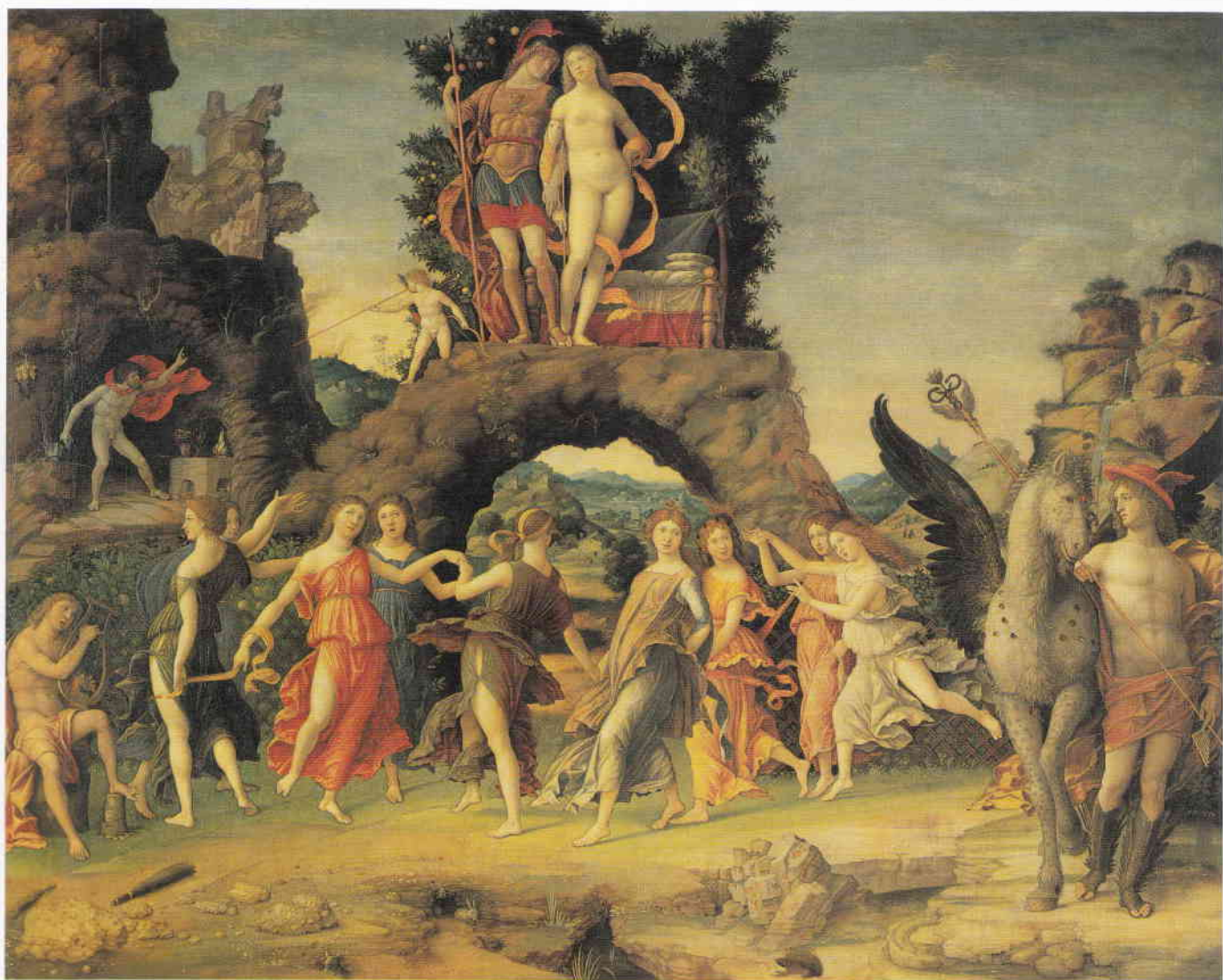


15.31. ANDREA MANTEGNA. *Parnassus*. c. 1495–97. Canvas, 5'3½" × 6'3⅝" (1.59 × 1.92 m). The Louvre, Paris. Commissioned by Isabella d'Este for her *studiolo* in the Gonzaga Castle, Mantua.

# Gentile Bellini

In Venice, meanwhile, the Bellini brothers were creating a new style. The older Gentile won a number of large, official commissions and was painting for a similar kind of public as Ghirlandaio, recording the Venetian scene as faithfully as Ghirlandaio did that of Florence. His *Procession of the Relic of the True Cross* (fig. 15.32) was painted for the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista. The *scuole* (schools) of Venice were not educational institutions as the name might suggest but confraternities of the same type as the Misericordia in Florence. Their members, who tended to come from the middle class, gathered for religious ceremonies and to do good works within the city. Needless to say, there was a certain amount of competition among the *scuole,* whose headquarters always included a large hall that was used as a combined hospice for the poor and hospital ward, a chapel, and often a meeting room as well. In a damp climate not conducive to fresco paintings, works on canvas formed suitable decorations for these public rooms, and series of large, framed narrative scenes for the *scuole* make up a large part of the production of some Venetian artists. While these series were usually dedicated to the life of the *scuola*'s patron saint, details of Venetian life are often included, and in some cases, as here, events in the life of the *scuola* are depicted.

The relic of the True Cross, the pride of the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, was carried annually in procession on the feast day of St. Mark through the Piazza San Marco. The painting shows the procession of 1444, when the miraculous healing of the son of a visiting merchant demonstrated the relic's power. The brothers of the order, dressed in white robes, are not those who were there in 1444, but rather portraits of Bellini's contemporaries, as are many of the spectators, while the setting documents contemporary Venetian life and buildings. The basilica of San Marco and the Doge's Palace are now much as they were then, although most of the mosaics of San Marco's façade have long since been replaced; thanks to Gentile's commitment to capturing Venetian life, we can gain an idea of their original appearance from his painting.

In 1479–80, Gentile served as court artist for Sultan Mehmet II of Constantinople. Most of the paintings he did for the sultan are lost, including, unfortunately, his decorations for the imperial harem in the Topkapi Palace. One that has survived is his *Portrait of Sultan Mehmet II the Conqueror* (fig. 15.33), which, despite its abraded surface, reveals a combination of Eastern and Renaissance



15.32. GENTILE BELLINI. *Procession of the Relic of the True Cross in Piazza San Marco.* 1496. Canvas, 12' × 24'5" (3.67 × 7.45 m). Accademia, Venice. Commissioned by the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista for its confraternity headquarters.
Gentile and his brother Giovanni Bellini were both members of this scuola, and Gentile included his portrait among the brothers of the order shown here, but he based the representation on a portrait drawn by his brother Giovanni.

15.33. GENTILE BELLINI. *Portrait of Sultan Mehmet II
the Conqueror.* 1480. Canvas, 27³/4 × 20⁵/8" (69.9 × 52.1 cm).
National Gallery, London.
It was Mehmet who masterminded the three-month siege that led to
the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks on May 29, 1453,
thereby ending the Byzantine Empire. The walls of Constantinople
proved vulnerable to the large guns that Mehmet had commissioned
from a Hungarian gun-founder. This painting was very damaged and
has been heavily restored.

elements. The portrait is treated naturalistically in the
Renaissance tradition, but this effect is muted by the scale
of the surrounding decoration; the enframing arch seems
too small for the figure, while the pattern of the sumptu-
ous Turkish cloth thrown over the sill of the opening is, in
contrast, too large.

Gentile's life in Constantinople provided material for
many anecdotes. For example, when he showed the sultan
a painting of the severed head of St. John the Baptist, a
subject intended for Christian contemplation, the sultan
considered the picture quite unrealistic. To prove his point
he called up two slaves, one with a sword. "This," said the
sultan to Gentile, after the headsman had given one expert
blow, "is how a freshly severed head should look!"
Gentile, apparently, soon left for home.

## Antonello da Messina

The development of Venetian art at this point is inter-
rupted by the appearance of Antonello da Messina (c.
1430–1479), from the Sicilian city of Messina. Active as
master of his own shop there by 1456, he traveled widely
but always returned to his native city. He arrived in Venice
in 1475, stayed a year and a half, and, it appears, changed
the course of Venetian painting. It seems to have been
Antonello who showed Venetian painters how oil paint could
be used to create subtle atmospheric and luminary effects.

Antonello may have learned to paint in oil from a
Flemish-influenced painter named Colantonio, with whom
he could have been apprenticed in Naples. In 1456 he is
recorded at the court of Galeazzo Maria Sforza in Milan,
where he was paid on the same basis as Petrus Christus, a
pupil of Jan van Eyck. He certainly studied Jan van Eyck's
paintings in Naples.

The son of a stonecutter, Antonello had a sculptor's
sense of form, and he may have studied the Archaic or
Severe Style Greek sculpture available in his native Sicily.
Certainly he was able to blend a quintessentially Mediter-
ranean clarity of form with a Netherlandish passion for the
details of visual reality and the definition of form by subtle
transitions of light and shadow. But neither these disparate
influences nor their unexpected combination in a single
artistic personality fully explains Antonello's innovative style.

One of Antonello's earliest pictures, *St. Jerome in His
Study* (fig. 15.34), is so Netherlandish in style that in 1529
there was a debate over whether it was by Antonello, Hans
Memling, or possibly Jan van Eyck himself. St. Jerome
reads quietly in a fantastic alcove set within a monastic
library. We are admitted to his study through an illusionis-
tic arch similar to those used by the Flemish painter Rogier
van der Weyden, albeit simpler and less Gothic. On the
step, lighted from the window through which we are
looking, are a brass bowl, a peacock, and a partridge. The
same light throws the shadow of the arch on the interior
and competes with the light from the distant windows. St.
Jerome's desk and shelves are mounted in the brightest
section, just below a clerestory window. In the shadows
behind him, his lion strolls across an elaborate majolica
floor, coming to a stop as if noticing us looking in through
the window. In true Van Eyck tradition, the picture is com-
plete down to the tiniest detail of architecture and still life,
including the Netherlandish motif of a towel hanging on a
nail. The light effects, the atmosphere of the room, and the
landscape visible through the windows all suggest
Antonello's use of Van Eyck's techniques of oil painting
and glazes. Like many Netherlandish paintings, this little
picture is a microcosm of its own at the same time that it
reveals the vastness of the outside world.
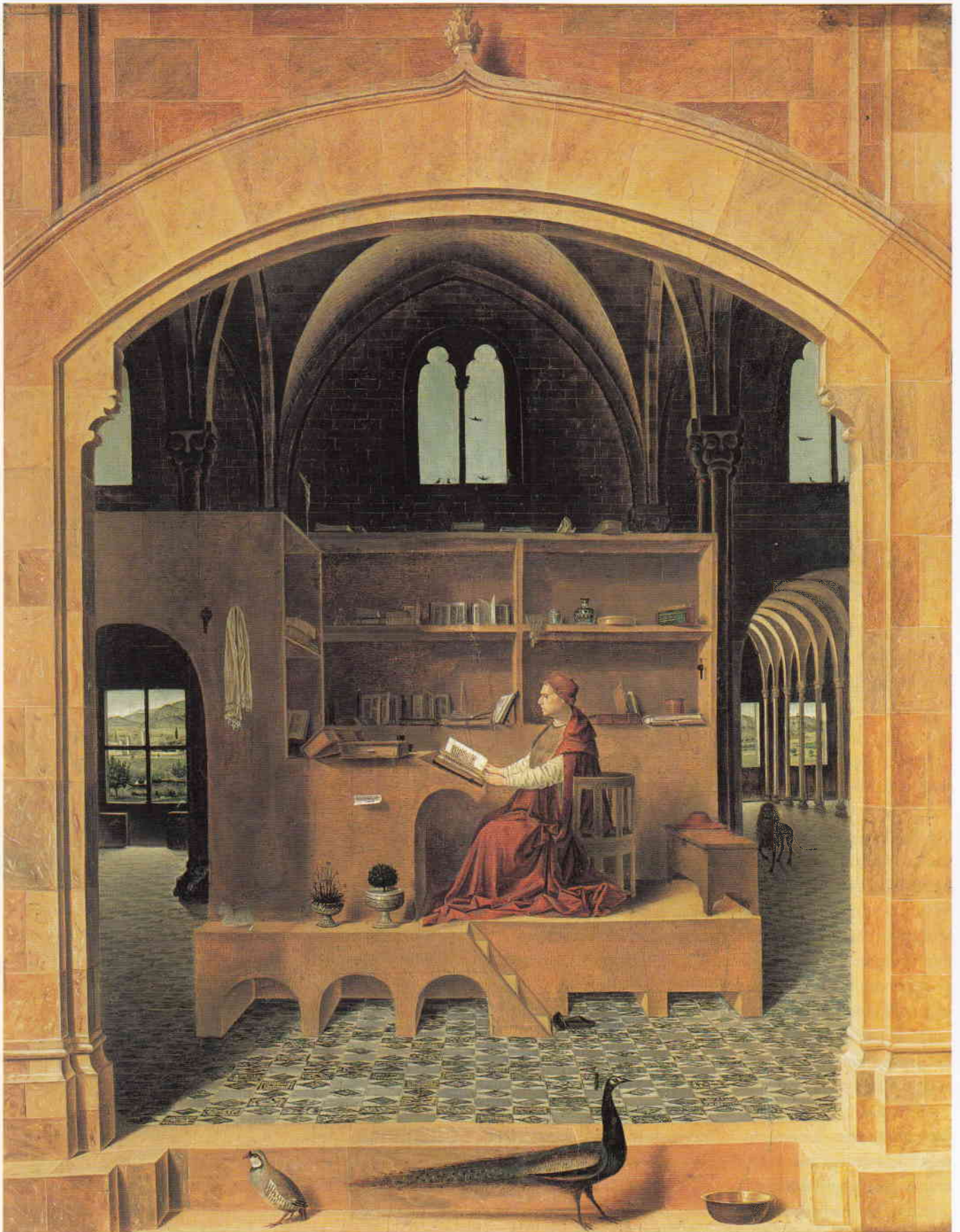
**15.34. ANTONELLO DA MESSINA.** *St. Jerome in His Study.* 1470s(?). Panel, 18 × 14⅛" (45.7 × 36.2 cm). National Gallery, London. Small paintings of the scholar saint in his study were popular devotional items for Italian Renaissance humanists.

15.35. ANTONELLO DA MESSINA. *Virgin Annunciate.*
c. 1465. Panel, 17³/₄ × 13³/₈" (45 × 34 cm). Museo Nazionale,
Palermo.



15.36. ANTONELLO DA MESSINA. *Portrait of a Man.* c. 1465.
Panel, 14 × 10" (35.6 × 25.4 cm). National Gallery, London.

In his *Virgin Annunciate* (fig. 15.35), Antonello has represented not the event of the Annunciation but the half-length figure of the Annunciate Virgin as a devotional image, timeless and removed from the traditional narrative. A book, probably of the prophet Isaiah, is open on a lectern before her, while her right hand is lifted, as if in surprise, and her left draws her blue veil over her chest. Light models the sculptural forms of her face, while shadow plays softly over her neck. In the manner of Jan van Eyck's portraits, the background is black, imparting greater intensity to Mary's blue veil and removing the image from any connection with the surrounding world. The features of her face are grave and composed. The expression in her brown eyes suggests that she realizes the meaning of the Incarnation.

Antonello's *Portrait of a Man* (fig. 15.36) had an inscription that is thought to have identified it as a self-portrait, but this was cut off in the eighteenth century and may have been merely a signature. Nevertheless, in this portrait of impressive psychological depth, Antonello demonstrates how the Northern and the Italian could be blended. He rivals Netherlandish painters in his observation of the play of light across the textures of the skin, the

faint stubble of the beard, the luminous eyes, and the dark hairs that escape from the red cap. These details enhance but do not distract from the simple three-dimensionality of form, which can be related to the Italian tradition.

*St. Sebastian* (fig. 15.37) is almost contemporary with Pollaiuolo's altarpiece on the same subject (see fig. 13.7), but Antonello chose a later moment in the story: the attack is over and the soldiers have left. One sleeps in the sun, feet first to the viewer, Mantegna-style, and two more chat before an arcade in the middle distance. The saint, pierced by arrows and tied to a tree, looks upward with calm trust. There is no sign of St. Irene, the woman who will remove his arrows and nurse him back to health; she became a standard figure only later, in Baroque representations of the saint. Antonello's figure is both commonplace and ideal. In the reciprocal rhythms of the harmonious stance and the low viewpoint of the perspective construction, set just below the knees of the saint, Antonello showed his understanding of Mantegna's style: figure and architecture tower above us as in the *St. James Led to Execution* (see fig. 15.17). But the only vestige of Mantegna's archaeological interests is the broken column lying to the right of the

saint. Instead of the usual loincloth, the saint wears fifteenth-century undershorts, and the buildings are contemporary Venetian houses, even to the flaring cylindrical chimneys. Afternoon sunlight unites the scene—the buildings, the people watching from carpet-hung balconies, the flowers in the window boxes, the Greek priests in the middle distance, the landscape beyond, the glowing skin of the nude figure, and the carefully observed clouds in the sky.
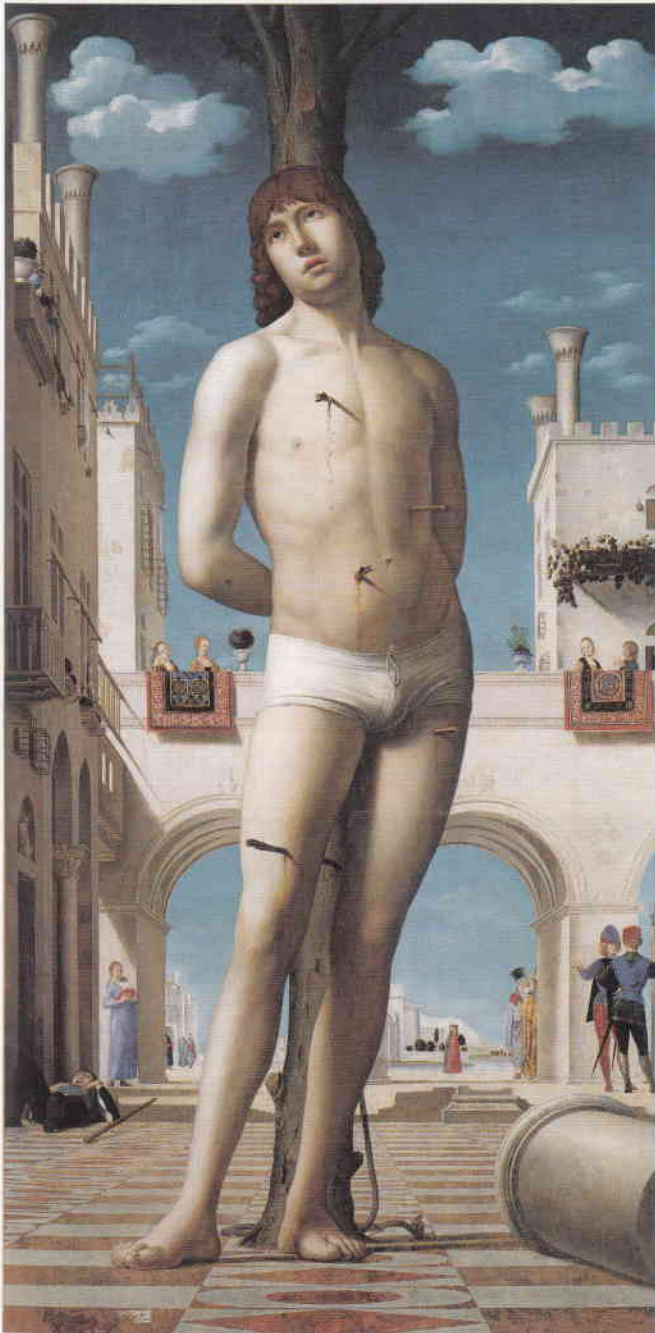


15.37. ANTONELLO DA MESSINA. *St. Sebastian.* c. 1475. Canvas, transferred from panel, 5'7¼" × 2'9⅞" (171 × 86 cm). Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. Commissioned for the Scuola dei SS. Rocco e Nicolò, Venice.

# Giovanni Bellini

It was Giovanni Bellini, or in Venetian dialect Giambellino, who brought Venetian painting to the threshold of the High Renaissance. His evolution would be incomprehensible without Antonello, from whom Giovanni must have learned the new possibilities of oil painting. We know little about Giovanni's character, and have no evidence for the date of his birth except for a document he signed as a witness in 1459, when he was already living away from his father and brother. In 1506, when Dürer visited Venice for a second time, he wrote that Giovanni was very old but still the best painter in the city. Giovanni's birth is usually placed in the 1430s, with some scholars arguing for about 1433, others for about 1435–36 or perhaps even a year or two later. He is recorded as a painter before 1460, and he continued painting until his death in 1516. Although the same poetic temperament can be felt in all Giovanni's paintings, the difference in style between the earliest and latest makes it hard at first to believe they were done by the same artist (compare fig. 15.38 with fig. 15.1, for example).

Bellini's early works, most of which are undated, show a strong affinity with Mantegna's style in the sculptural hardness of the masses, the firmness of contour, the crispness of detail, and the careful construction of the picture. But Giovanni never presents us with the same consistency, the same rigor of organization, the same finality as Mantegna. While Mantegna's world seems absolute and unchanging, Giovanni's works convey emotion and human experience, and his figures suggest a community of feeling.

A grave, pensive *Madonna and Child* (fig. 15.38) is typical of Giovanni's early half-length Madonnas. Lifting her hands in prayer, Mary looks sadly down toward the sleeping Christ, whose slumber is meant to remind the observer of his death on the cross. Mary's face is suffused by light from below—the sea light of Venice, reflected from canals and palaces, which Giovanni used even for Madonnas set in landscapes. In the early works, such landscape views provide a background of easy roads and gentle slopes but, as Giovanni's work develops, the notion that figures and nature are part of a single continuum becomes an important part of his expressive vocabulary. Giovanni was not interested in the enameled brilliance of color seen in the contemporary works of his brother-in-law Mantegna. In his early works, he preferred a harmonious combination of pearly pale flesh tones, soft gray-blues, and shades of rose, as seen here. Later, with the use of oil, his color warms and deepens, and the effect of the sea light so important for Venetian painting is strengthened.

Giovanni's *Agony in the Garden* (fig. 15.39) is close to Mantegna's version of the same subject (see fig. 15.22) in date. Both derive from the compositions of Jacopo Bellini,

15.38. GIOVANNI BELLINI. *Madonna and Child.* c. 1460–65. Panel, $28\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{1}{4}$" ($72 \times 46$ cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

but Giovanni's seems to reveal his awareness of Mantegna's painting as well. Yet Giovanni ignores the grandeur of the landscape and the classical reminiscences of Mantegna, choosing instead to represent a simple northern Italian landscape where the Venetian plain meets the hills near Padua—a hill town on one side, a clustered village on the other, and in between a badly eroded valley. The rosy dawn light of Good Friday has started to color the undersides of the clouds, as it does in Jacopo Bellini's *Madonna of Humility with Donor* (see fig. 15.11). The color scheme is dominated not by the reds, yellows, and blues of the garments, as in Mantegna's painting, but by the tones of the still-shadowed earth and the delicate sky; there is an expressive poetry in Giovanni Bellini's landscape not found in Mantegna's. Giovanni's Christ lifts his head just above the horizon as he contemplates a single transparent angel holding the traditional chalice. Instead of Mantegna's Roman platoon, Giovanni's Judas leads a ragtag band of sleepy soldiers, and Giovanni is less interested in perspective projection than in the fitful and exhausted slumber of the apostles. Giovanni's sympathy with nature and his understanding of how landscape and light help to create a mood are here revealed as important aspects of his style.

Of all Giovanni Bellini's early works, perhaps the most moving is the *Pietà* (fig. 15.40), which is again closely related to a composition originated by Jacopo Bellini. The tomb ledge suggests the parapet of Jacopo's Madonna compositions, while behind the ledge Mary and John the Evangelist hold up the dead Christ for meditation. His head, still crowned with thorns, falls toward that of the



15.39. GIOVANNI BELLINI. *Agony in the Garden.* c. 1465. Panel, $32 \times 50$" ($81.3 \times 127$ cm). National Gallery, London.
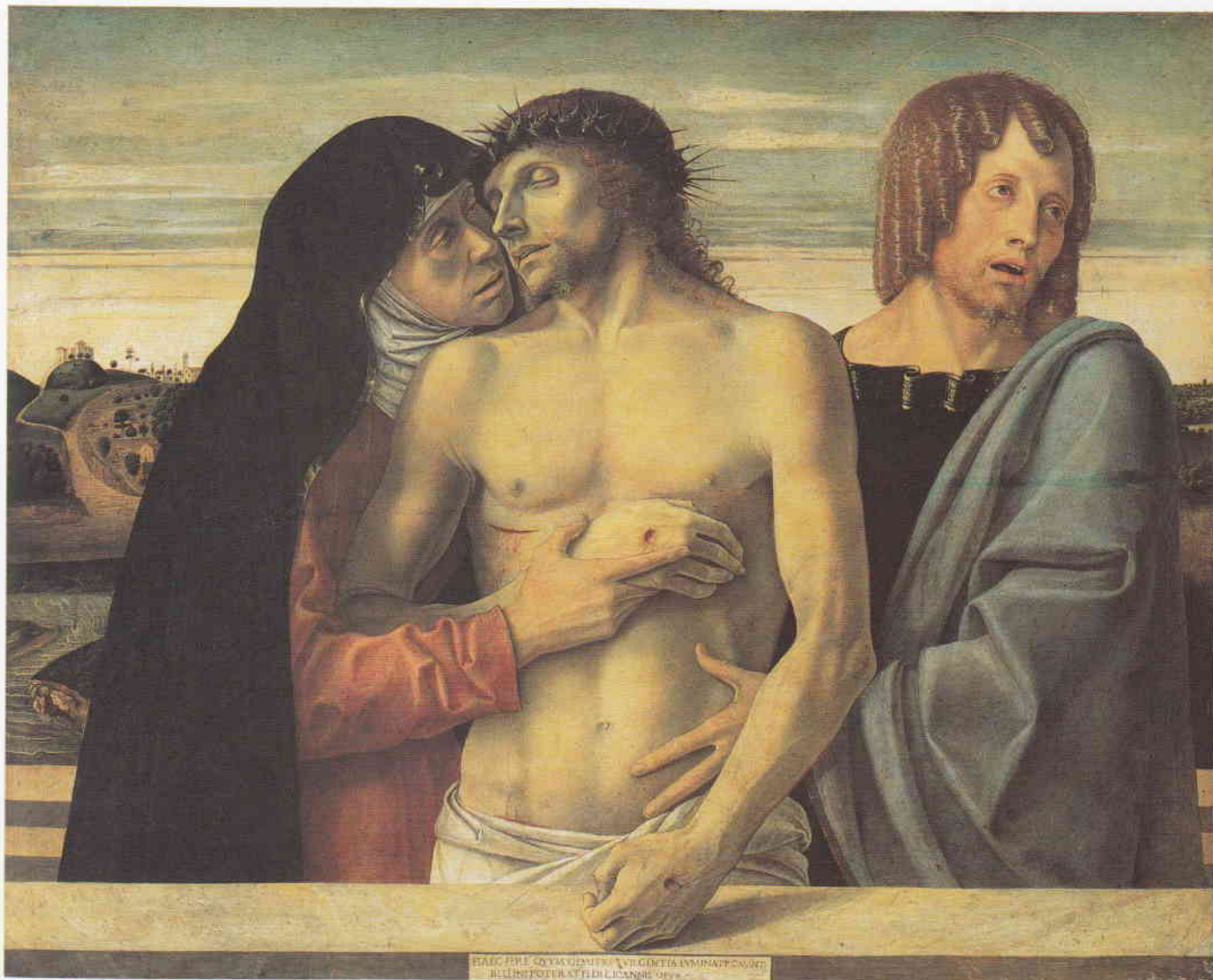
15.40. GIOVANNI BELLINI. *Pietà*. c. 1467–70. Panel, 33¼ × 42" (84.5 × 106.7 cm). Brera Gallery, Milan.

ashen, worn Mary, who brings her cheek almost to his and searches the pale face and sunken eyes. Her eyes, and those of John, are red from weeping, and the inscription at the bottom reads, "When these swelling eyes evoke groans, this work of Giovanni Bellini could shed tears." The streams of blood that have congealed below the lance wound and along the left forearm are the warmest tones in the picture. The cold clear sky complements the subdued colors of the drapery, and the atmosphere suggests the biting clarity of a winter day. The colors of the flesh of Mary and John are a subtle contrast to the greenish tones of Christ's gently illuminated body. Both figures and landscape seem locked between the twin horizontals of marble at the bottom and clouds at the top. Never again are Giovanni's dramas so intense or his appeal to emotion so explicit. As his style matures, the content of his pictures becomes warmer and richer, as does his sun-drenched color.

Giovanni's large *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints*, known as the San Giobbe altarpiece because it was commissioned for the Hospital of San Giobbe (fig. 15.41), is related to both a *Madonna Enthroned with Saints* painted by Antonello in 1476 for San Cassiano (known today only in fragments) and the *Madonna and Child with Saints* by Piero (see fig. 11.30). This gathering in heaven is represented as taking place in a Renaissance pavilion, and the monumentality of the painting lies not just in its scale, but in the manner in which the figures relate to Giovanni's grandly conceived space. For Bellini here gave the figures not only reasonable proportions in comparison with the architecture—Piero had already done that—but also reasonable positions within rather than before the illusionistic space; this effect is much clearer when the painting is reunited with its original frame. The standing figures are less than one-third the height of the barrel vault above them,

15.41. GIOVANNI BELLINI. *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Sts. Francis, John the Baptist, Job, Dominic, Sebastian, and Louis of Toulouse* (San Giobbe altarpiece). c. 1478–80. Panel, 15'4" × 8'4" (4.7 × 2.5 m). Accademia, Venice. Commissioned for the chapel in the Hospital of S. Giobbe, Venice; the patron may have been the Scuola di S. Giobbe. Digitized reconstruction by Nick Newton.

Christian churches are seldom dedicated to Old Testament figures, but in Venice Job and Moses each have their own church. This digitized reconstruction shows the painting in its original frame, which was probably carved by Pietro Lombardo in consultation with Bellini. The frame survives in the original location, while the painting has been moved to a museum.

and even the Virgin's towering throne does not elevate her head as high as the mathematical center of the picture, which is marked by the golden cross that tops her throne.

The illusion that the apse behind the Madonna is decorated with a shimmering Byzantine mosaic is a typical Venetian reference to the Basilica of San Marco. On Mary's left, the figure of St. Sebastian, more idealized and classical in feeling than Antonello's representation of the same saint (see fig. 15.37), is here as protector of the sick. The old man with a long white beard at Mary's right is Job, patron saint of the hospital because of his physical and mental sufferings. The details show Giovanni's ability to represent textures and the sweetness of expression characteristic of his mature pictures. Here he also demonstrates a new freedom in the use of the brush.

Giovanni's *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Sts. Peter, Nicholas, Benedict, and Mark* (fig. 15.42) shows a steady increase in the artist's interest in light. The altarpiece is still in the position for which it was painted and it has its original frame, complete with dolphins and winged tritons, motifs drawn from the sea that are more common in Venice than elsewhere during the Renaissance. The union of frame and painted architecture—the capitals inside the picture are identical with those of the frame— defines a clear illusion of space that is probably ultimately derived from Mantegna's design at San Zeno (see fig. 15.19). In Giovanni's example the arched triptych format adds additional complexity.

The use of oil in this altarpiece enabled Giovanni to develop a continuous atmosphere in which light subtly dissolves into shadow. It is almost as if the gilded Renaissance frame were casting a golden light into Mary's shrine, to be given back out in softer keys by the painted gold mosaic of the apse. The forms themselves are no longer as clearly defined as in Giovanni's earlier works; the contours of faces and figures and the boundaries between figures subtly merge with the atmosphere. Only the oil medium and oil glaze can account for this kind of transformation, which was certainly prompted by Giovanni's wonder, recorded by contemporary sources, at Antonello's work. With oil paint Giovanni was able to re-create the fluid fabric of light and atmosphere that surrounds us. In this new delight in optical beauty, certain qualities of the artist's early works have been lost, however: their poignancy and, at times, somber drama are different from the world of opulence that Giovanni depicted in his years of success. His Madonnas now seem untroubled by any premonition of the Passion.

Giovanni's pantheistic view of nature is explicit in his *St. Francis in Ecstasy* (fig. 15.43). It is not certain exactly what moment in the saint's life is represented in this unusually large narrative painting; it has been argued that this is

15.42. GIOVANNI BELLINI. *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Sts. Peter, Nicholas, Benedict, and Mark* (Frari altarpiece). 1488. Panel: center 6'1/2" × 2'6¾" (184 × 78 cm); sides each 3'9¼" × 18" (115 × 46 cm). 🏛 Sacristy, Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. Commissioned by the sons of Pietro Pesaro and Franceschina Tron in memory of their mother. The woodworker who made the frame, Jacopo da Faenza, signed it on the back, but the design is almost certainly by Bellini.

not the stigmatization because we already see the wounds in the saint's hands. Whatever the exact moment, what we see here is an ecstatic figure of St. Francis in a verdant natural setting. He stands before a cave supplied with a grape arbor that shades his rough desk, on which only a book and skull appear. With hands outstretched, he looks upward toward a burst of golden light in the upper left corner. A slender sapling seems to bend toward him, and water flows from a stone spout attached to a little spring below. Both water and sapling are references to Moses—

the burning bush and the water struck from the rock—in line with the interest of Francis's followers in depicting him as a second Moses. In the distance, beyond a standing crane and a motionless donkey—the latter an exemplar of patience and a symbol of solitude, penitence, and poverty—a shepherd watches over his flock. The rabbit in a burrow is a reference to a hermit in a cave. The sunlight seems to pour down on the fertile valley, the hillsides, the outcroppings of rock, the tranquil city, the humans, animals, and plants, and, above all, the saint. The

15.43. GIOVANNI BELLINI. *St. Francis in Ecstasy*. c. 1480. Oil and tempera on panel, 4'1" × 4'7⁷/₈"
(124.4 × 141.9 cm). The Frick Collection, New York. Commissioned by Zuan Michiel, a prominent
Venetian involved in the city's government and, like Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, a member of the
Scuola Grande di San Marco.

clear deep blue of the sky helps to explain the crystalline nature of the detail throughout. Every object is represented with a Netherlandish fidelity to visual accuracy worthy of Antonello.

As the Quattrocento ended and the new century began, Giovanni's art grew even stronger and more expressive. Despite his advancing age in a period when the average male lived to be only forty-four, Giovanni in his seventies seems to have experienced no slackening of observation or imagination, no dulling of sensitivity, no loss of skill.

Giovanni's late altarpieces such as the *Enthroned Madonna with Saints* (figs. 15.1, 15.44) offer an impressive unity of composition and monumentality of effect. This kind of painting impressed Fra Bartolommeo when he visited Venice in 1507; he emulated it on his return to Florence and Raphael in turn learned about it from him. At first sight the general formulation seems almost identical with that of the San Giobbe altarpiece, but there is a profound difference: the painted architecture is not related to our position as spectators, nor to our angle of vision. The viewpoint proposed by the perspective scheme, as in Leonardo's *Last Supper* (see fig. 16.23), is level with the heads of the saints, nine or ten feet above the floor. Not one of the seven figures in the painting looks at another, creating a mood of introspective calm. Each of the saints, wrapped in a voluminous mantle, is separated from the next by the enveloping light and atmosphere, some of which seems to enter from the landscape to either side. The outlines are almost completely dissolved in light or shadow, but Giovanni's control of form remains absolute. The figures stand out against the creamy marble and blue-green-gold mosaic of the shrine by the brilliance of their garments.

For the last eleven years of his life, Giovanni Bellini competed with—and was eventually influenced by—his gifted pupils and successor: Giorgione, whom he outlived, and Titian, who was to live almost beyond the chronological limits of the Renaissance. To complete his innumerable commissions, Giovanni maintained a large staff of assistants who, following the master's sketches and directions, painted many Madonna compositions that bear the Bellini signature. His followers and imitators popularized the Bellini manner in Venice and its subject cities, where it became the dominant style.

15.44. Photograph of fig. 15.1 in situ. This photograph by Thomas Struth provides us with a sense of context for Bellini's San Zaccaria altarpiece, which is completely surrounded by oil-on-canvas paintings of various dates. The overall decoration of Venetian church interiors with oil paintings is similar to the manner in which churches in Tuscany and Rome were filled with frescoes.

## Vittore Carpaccio

Vittore Carpaccio (c. 1460/66–1525/26) owes almost nothing to Giovanni Bellini and only the idea of the crowded, anecdotal narrative to Gentile. His style is personal and fanciful, full of witty observation embodied in a new kind of narrative composition.

Carpaccio was the perfect painter for the *scuole*, and he spent most of his artistic career decorating their various headquarters with canvases of considerable size; we have little evidence that he received commissions for altarpieces and Madonnas. Most of his time in the 1490s was spent in carrying out an extensive cycle for the Scuola di Sant' Orsola. The legend of Ursula (Orsola in Italian) tells how Etherius, the pagan son of the king of Britain, sought the hand of the Christian Ursula, daughter of the king of Brittany. Ursula demanded that Etherius convert to Christianity and that they have a three-year cooling-off period, during

15.45. VITTORE CARPACCIO. *Departure of the Prince from Britain, His Arrival in Brittany, and Departure of the Betrothed Couple for Rome*, 1495. Canvas, 9'2" × 20' (2.8 × 6.1 m). Accademia, Venice. Cycle commissioned by the Scuola di Sant'Orsola for the confraternity headquarters, perhaps with the financial assistance of the Loredan family. The St. Ursula cycle was removed from its original setting and is now displayed in the museum.

which Ursula and her ten maids of honor, each accompanied by a thousand virgins, would make a pilgrimage to Rome. On their return trip, the 11,011 virgins were waylaid by the Huns at Cologne and slaughtered.

Carpaccio divided the story into eight large paintings, one of which shows the departure of the prince from Britain, his arrival in Brittany, and the departure of the couple for Rome (fig. 15.45). Although Britain at the left and Brittany at the right are separated by a flagpole, the same sunny Venetian sky with big, floating clouds unites them. For Carpaccio they were merely two sides of the same ideal harbor, a background for a narrative sequence that allows a celebration of the naval power and palatial splendor of imperial Venice. Britain could be any Venetian port along the Dalmatian coast or in the Aegean islands, with a castle rising above the fortifications of a seaside city. Brittany is Carpaccio's fantasy on Quattrocento Venice, with marble-clad palaces, domes, towers crowding to the sea, and ships being repaired in the naval arsenal of Venice (see fig. 15.56). The verticals of towers, flagpoles, and masts and the diagonal of the galleon gave him straight lines with which to unite the diffuse composition.

The narrative moves from left to right. First, the prince kneels to take leave of his father; next we see him dressed in brocade meeting his bride; then, prince and princess kneel before the king of Brittany; finally, to the sound of trumpets, the young couple and the first contingent of virgins move toward the longboat that will take them to waiting

ships. Carpaccio's colors are generally subdued by an allover golden tonality so that even the occasional strong reds, blues, and greens are never obtrusive. His series of paintings for the *scuole* are united by this atmospheric effect. He demonstrates a preference for triangular areas—people, drapery passages, sails, banners, architectural shapes—and the result is a Venetian web of space and color. The delicately lit faces seldom betray emotion. Many are surely contemporary portraits; perhaps the artist himself peers at us from the crowds who throng his docksides and piazzas.

The *Arrival of the Ambassadors of Britain at the Court of Brittany* (fig. 15.46) depicts an earlier episode in the legend. In the center, the ambassadors kneel before the enthroned monarch. On the right, the king is seated at the edge of a bed, his crowned head propped on one hand, as he listens wearily while his daughter ticks off on her fingers the conditions she intends to impose for the marriage. The painting offers many delightful details, including the shrewd portraiture, the wittily drawn distant figures, and the intimate scene in the king's bedchamber, where what appears to be an early Madonna by Giovanni Bellini hangs on the wall. Carpaccio's golden tonality saturates the marble slabs and splendid fabrics with the glow of afternoon.

Carpaccio's poetic style is evident in the *Dream of St. Ursula* (fig. 15.47). The saint is sleeping in a high-ceilinged bedroom when a golden-haired angel enters to bring her the palm that signals her approaching martyrdom. The angel is accompanied by a burst of powerful light based on

15.46. VITTORE CARPACCIO. *Arrival of the Ambassadors of Britain at the Court of Brittany.* c. 1495–96. Canvas, 9' × 19'4" (2.74 × 5.89 m). Accademia, Venice.
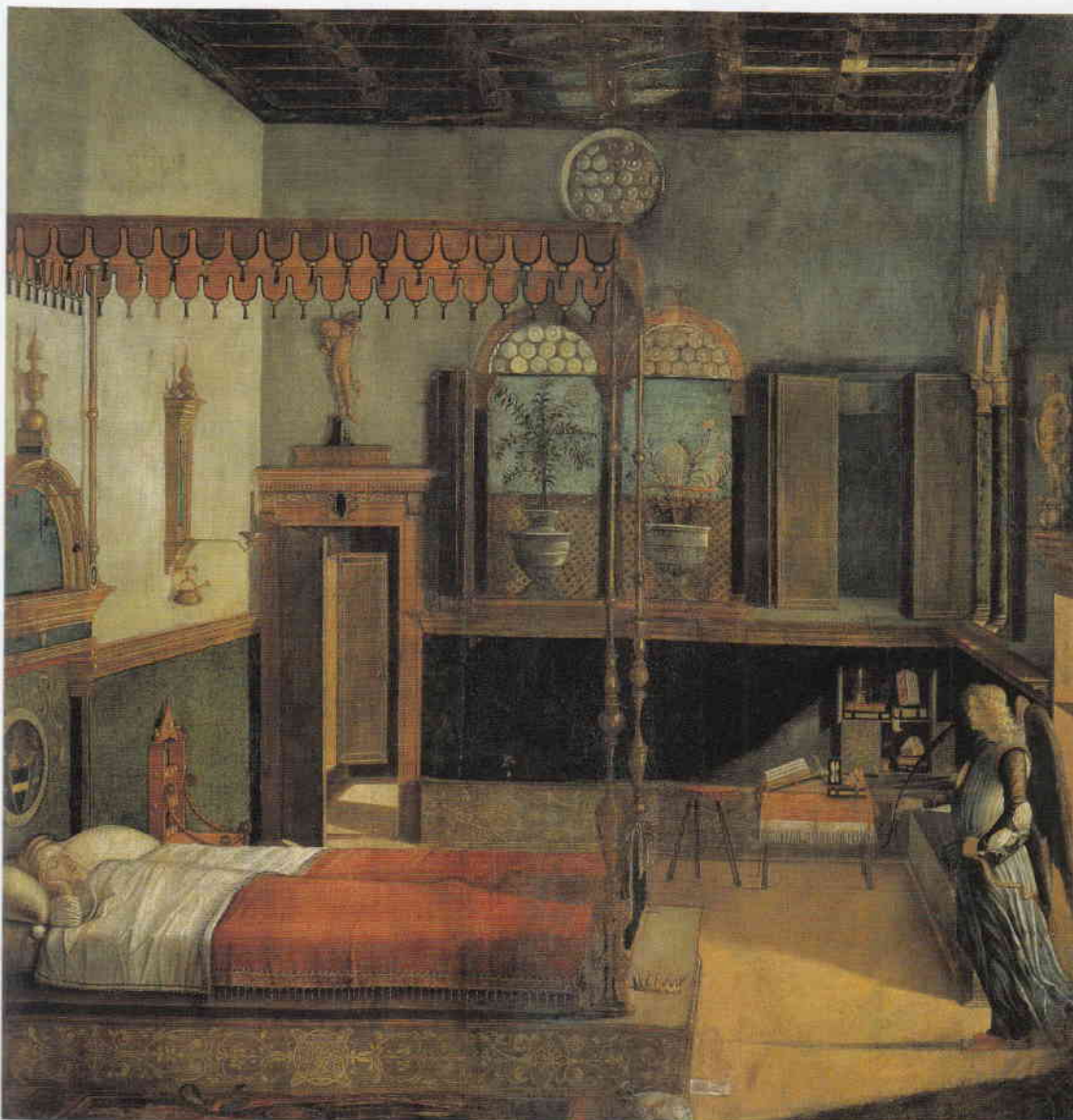


15.47. VITTORE CARPACCIO. *Dream of St. Ursula.* 1495. Canvas, 9' × 8'9" (2.74 × 2.7 m). Accademia, Venice.

Carpaccio's study of morning sunlight effects. Here it may represent a flash of divine light accompanying the revelation in the deep of night. Every detail is observed with almost Antonellesque fidelity, down to the three-legged stool, the reading table with lectern and portable library that accompanied the saint on her trip, the wooden clogs before her bed, and the crown carefully laid on the bench at its foot. The light effects range from the burst accompanying the angel and the sharp ray running along the ceiling from the oculus window at the right to the softer effects in the anteroom and the diffused sparkle of the bottle-bottom windows. All are unified by the softened red and greenish-gray tones that predominate. A *Madonna and Child* painting or relief hangs on the wall, with a candle in a holder in front of it and, below, a sprinkler and bucket for holy water so that the image could be sprinkled before and during devotions. Some day perhaps iconographers will discover why over one door there is a beautifully painted nude statue of a water carrier and over the other a provocative Venus on her shell. Neither seems to have much to do with the chaste saint sleeping so peacefully in her bed.

Probably in the late 1490s Carpaccio painted his *Meditation on the Passion* (fig. 15.48). The body of the dead Christ is displayed on a ruined throne between two bearded hermit-saints. St. Jerome, on the left, is identified by his lion in the background; his companion is Job, an identification based in part on his similarity to the figure in Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece. Reminders of death appear everywhere: a skull rests on the ground under Job's knees, the top of Jerome's staff is carved with a hand clutching a bone, and his rosary is a threaded set of vertebrae. Yet the dead Christ almost seems to be dreaming in the warm afternoon sunlight. St. Jerome wrote a commentary on the Book of Job in which he interpreted Job's words, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (19:25), as a prophecy of Christ's Resurrection. In the preceding verse Job had asked that his words be "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock," and this is just what Carpaccio has done. Among the generally meaningless tracks on the block on which Job sits can be read, "My redeemer liveth. 19," a clear reference to the passage just cited.

The landscape is doubtless symbolic. As in Piero della Francesca's *Resurrection* (see fig. 11.20), it is sharply divided. To the left, dominated by a withered tree, is a wild and rocky mountainside where a doe grazes, oblivious to the fate that has befallen her mate, attacked by a leopard. On the right, before a rich landscape of farms, orchards, castles, a peaceful town, and green trees, another stag runs from a pursuing leopard. The stag, symbolizing the human soul (Psalm 42: "As the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God"), is torn by the leopard on one side and escapes on the other, just as Job, once tormented, was later blessed by God. A bird, symbolizing the Resurrection, flies up from behind Christ's throne. This unusual picture must have been
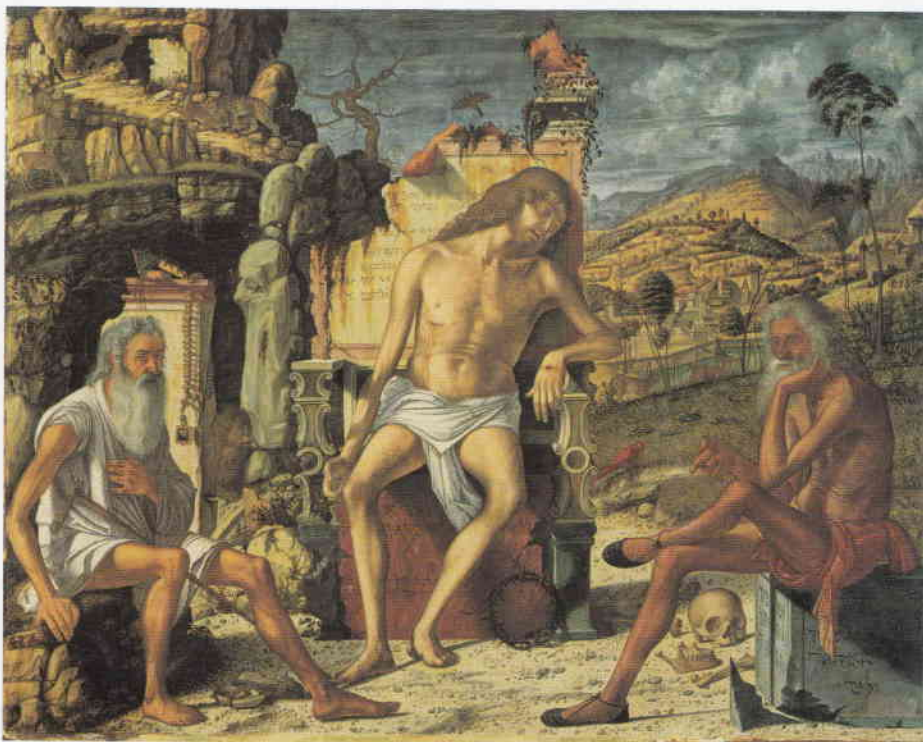


**15.48. VITTORE CARPACCIO.**
*Meditation on the Passion.* Late 1490s.
Panel, 27¾ × 34⅛" (70.5 × 86.7 cm).
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

made for a patron who outlined for the painter his or her specific needs for private devotion.

Carpaccio never surpassed the glowing landscape and the pearly clouds of this painting, nor did he equal the personal religious poetry that makes it so intriguing. His late work has been interpreted by some as a decline and, after 1510, he obtained his commissions only from more remote places like the fishing town of Chioggia or the provincial centers of Istria and the Dalmatian coast.

## Carlo Crivelli

Carlo Crivelli (c. 1435–c. 1495) is even harder to place than Carpaccio. Although a Venetian by birth, he spent almost all his active life far from Venetian territory. He might logically be considered a central Italian painter if it were not for the fact that his early style was formed by the Paduan school. Our first information about him is a court judgment against him in 1457 for having "kept hidden for many months" the wife of an absent sailor, "knowing her carnally in contempt of God and of Holy Matrimony." He was sentenced to six months in prison and a heavy fine, and is presumed to have left Venice soon after his release. Still signing himself proudly "Carolus Crivellus Venetus," he spent the rest of his life in the Marches, where his sharply individual style had considerable influence on local artists.

Although Crivelli's known activity spans about thirty years, his style developed little. He left Venice before the flowering of Giovanni Bellini's atmospheric art, taking with him his own linear version of the Paduan manner. Hair, veins, and muscles are carefully outlined, and forms are sharply projected. Sometimes the drops of Christ's blood, the tears of mourners, or the attributes of saints are modeled in low relief in gesso so they stand out from the painting's surface. In 1492 he was still using a gold background, although it is possible that this may have been required or expected by his provincial patrons. His color is often stony or metallic, yet the effect of a Crivelli painting is not hard. The stone he paints is colored marble containing rich fluctuations of tone, with additions of gold, silver, or both. The result is something like a tapestry with gold threads—sumptuous, russet, deeply glowing but subdued. This is Crivelli's own version of the Venetian web (see p. 150).

A typical work, the *Pietà* (fig. 15.49), reveals the intensity of Crivelli's rendering of the scenes of the Passion. Before a gold background and a cloth-of-honor made by tooling the gold surface, lamenting angels hold up the dead Christ. Christ's head is thrown back, his mouth hangs open. A gigantic spear wound yawns in his side, and one huge nail wound in his left hand is shown in profile so that its depth may be assessed. The taut veins, tendons, and



15.49. CARLO CRIVELLI. *Pietà*. c. 1470. Panel, 28 × 18¼" (71 × 47 cm). John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Probably this panel was part of a polyptych with other, still-unidentified panels.

wrinkles are projected by Crivelli's sharp surface hatching to an almost unbearable degree, given the subject of the painting. Yet his sense of pattern is so strong and his golden tonality so insistent that there is no sense of disunity between the painted forms and the effect of relief.

In his later works, Crivelli achieved an even greater harmony of form, color, and surface. In the *Madonna della Candeletta* (fig. 15.50), he signed himself as "eques" ("knight"), a slight inflation of the rank of "miles" ("soldier") conferred upon him in 1490 by Prince Ferdinand of Capua, later King Ferdinand of Naples. The picture's title derives from the thin candle that burns at the lower left. The crowned Virgin sits upon a veined marble throne, its bench, pedestal, and base seeming to continue out of the frame at either side. The garlands of fruit and leaves, which Crivelli had incorporated as part of his standard repertory from Padua and Venice, are here gathered

15.50. CARLO CRIVELLI. *Madonna della Candeletta*. Early 1490s. Panel, 7'2" × 29½" (218 × 75 cm). Brera Gallery, Milan.

to form a little bower. Not even the dark blue and gold velvet brocade of Mary's mantle or the red and gold of her sleeves can compete with the magnificence of the apples, cucumbers, and pears. These great, rounded shapes, with their metallic colors and rippling leaves, give the picture a kind of magical intensity. Even Mary's face, with its down-cast eyes and solemn frontality, is likened in shape to the apples and pears and shines as softly as they do. Again, Crivelli projects his forms sharply and lets the light cast shadows on the painted marble; the effect is that of a precious Renaissance textile. Crivelli's was a strongly personal style of refinement and brilliance, hermetically sealed from the developments of his Venetian contemporaries, from whom the artist exiled himself. Yet his work was certainly one of the major achievements of northern Italian art of the Quattrocento.

## Venetian Fabrics

The opulent cloth we have seen in Quattrocento Venetian paintings reflects the local cloth industry, which was one of the great successes of Venetian commercialism. Here we illustrate an example of the sumptuous silk cut-velvet fabric for which Italy, and Venice in particular, became famous (fig. 15.51). The pomegranate pattern seen here was introduced from Islamic art around 1425 and became wildly popular. Red was the most expensive dye because it was produced from pregnant kermes beetles, and the addition of metallic thread further increased the cost. Such fabrics were used for fashionable dresses and also for bed hangings.

While few examples of actual fabric of this era survive in good condition, the representation of fabrics in Italian and Northern paintings testifies to their popularity; note, for example, the small piece of fabric hanging from the tie bar behind the Virgin's throne in Giovanni Bellini's San Zaccaria altarpiece (fig. 15.1). The sumptuous nature of Venetian life and art can be related to these luxury fabrics, which frequently appear in Venetian and north Italian paintings of the sixteenth century (see figs. 19.9, 19.32, 19.53).

## Venetian Publishing

We have already studied a beautiful illuminated manuscript, the copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy* made for Federico da Montefeltro (see fig. 14.33), produced about 1477–82. The page from the works of Aristotle illustrated here (fig. 15.52) was produced in Venice in 1483 and may
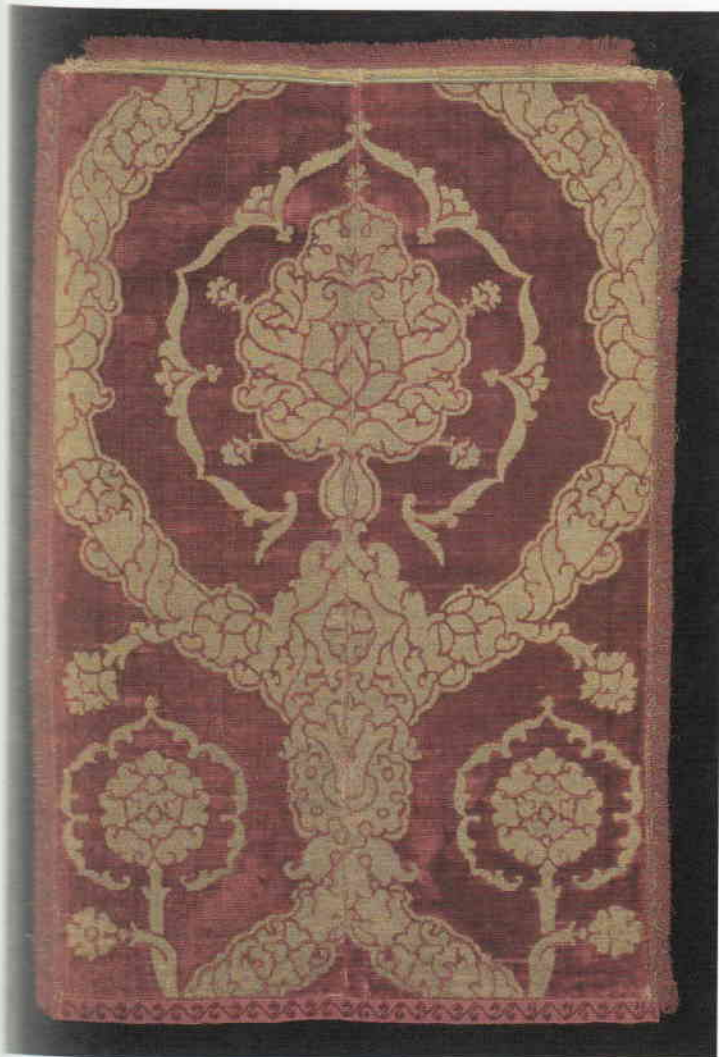
15.51. ITALIAN (FLORENCE or VENICE?). Velvet textile (portion). 1470–1530. Velvet cloth-of-gold, with loops of silver-gilt thread, 9'9⁵⁄₁₆" × 23⁹⁄₁₆" (298 × 60 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (81-1892).



15.52. GIROLAMO DA CREMONA and assistants. *Aristotle Lecturing Averroës*, from *Aristotle, Works, with Commentary of Averroës and Isagoge of Porphyry* (Venice: Andreas Torresanus and Bartholomeus de Blavis, 1483). Printed book on parchment with hand-painted decoration in tempera and gold, 16⅛ × 10¾" (40.9 × 27.2 cm). The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Commissioned by Peter Ugelheimer, a banker and book collector, who is recognized in the inscription that runs along the bottom of the architectural tabernacle: "Peter Ugelheimer has brought [this] Aristotle forth to the world."

at first seem similar. There is, however, one important difference: in this case the text is not hand-lettered but printed on a printing press. Printing quickly became an important industry in Venice during the later Quattrocento, but luxury books such as this one could still be decorated with hand-painted illustrations. The book includes both Aristotle's works and the commentary on them written by the great Islamic scholar Averroës in the twelfth century. Both works had been newly translated into Latin by Nicoletto Vernia, a professor at the nearby University of Padua.

The painting, by Girolamo da Cremona (active 1460–1483) and his workshop assistants, is a masterful *trompe l'oeil* illusion. Pearls, gold decoration, and ancient cameo portraits seem to be hanging on red silk threads in front of the printed page, which is decorated with a bearded figure in the initial. The page, however, seems to

be torn on the sides to reveal a scene of Aristotle with Averroës (who wears a turban to identify him as a Muslim) and a landscape with an architectural tabernacle and satyrs and *putti*. To turn the page and find this *tour-de-force* must have delighted Quattrocento viewers. The painter appears to have wittily ripped away the printed page to suggest that naturalistic scenes lie behind it. Girolamo da Cremona, who was probably trained by Mantegna, worked in Ferrara, Mantua, Padua, Siena, and Florence before returning to Venice in 1474/75.

## Late Quattrocento Sculpture and Architecture in Venice

As elsewhere in Italy, public buildings and churches in Venice were decorated with large figural sculpture. The figures of Adam and Eve by Antonio Rizzo (active after 1465, d. 1499/1500) for the courtyard of the Doge's Palace reveal different approaches to the representation of the male and female nude (figs. 15.53–15.54). Eve still follows the late medieval tradition of narrow shoulders, small breasts, and broad hips, and her demeanor is appropriately modest; she looks down shyly and moves to cover her genitals and breasts—a pose based on the *Venus pudica* type known from antiquity, which also influenced Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (see fig. 13.24). Adam, on the other hand, is a vigorous and muscular figure based on both ancient heroic types and a living model. And while Eve seems to look inward, Adam turns his head upward and his mouth is wide open. Both his expression and his stance reveal that he has been caught in a moment of activity, but Rizzo's exact expressive intent is not clear. The distinction between Rizzo's representation of male and female in these figures is one of many indications of the different roles presumed to be appropriate for men and women during the Renaissance.

Quattrocento Venetian tombs are especially impressive. As an example, we turn to a work made by a family of builders, stonecarvers, and sculptors from Lombardy and hence named Lombardo. They included Pietro (c. 1435–1515) and his sons Antonio (c. 1458–1516) and Tullio (c. 1455–1532); they were active in Venice in the last quarter of the Quattrocento. The monumental tomb of Doge Pietro Mocenigo, who died in 1476 after serving only one year as doge, was made by Pietro in collaboration with his young sons and their workshop assistants (fig. 15.55). The Risen Christ surmounts the arch at the top, but Doge Mocenigo, posing vigorously atop his own sarcophagus, seems larger and—in part because he is closer to the viewer—more important. The exquisitely carved decorative motifs are all drawn from antiquity, and the lowest level even includes reliefs representing two of the Labors of Hercules, probably as a reference to the heroic stature of Doge Mocenigo. His military exploits on behalf of Venice are celebrated in two scenes on the sarcophagus, while reliefs of war booty flank the long laudatory inscription. The simple phrase on the sarcophagus itself—EX HOSTIUM MANUBIIS ("From Spoils Taken from the Enemy")—reveals that the tomb was financed with military spoils. This is only one of a number of multilevel tombs with life-sized figures made for the doges. Such monuments, which are in sharp contrast the smaller, simpler tombs made in Florence for the repub-
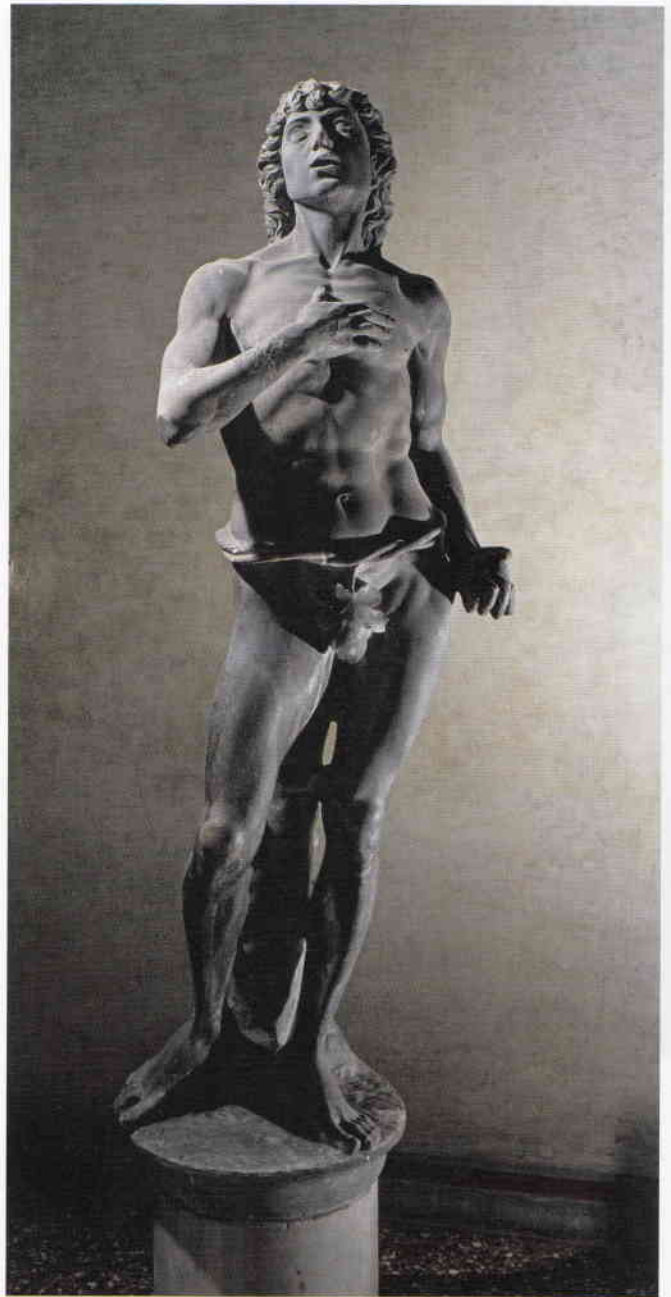


15.53. ANTONIO RIZZO. *Adam.* c. 1480? Marble, 6'9" (2.06 m). This figure and its pendant *Eve* were originally placed on the Arco Foscari in the Doge's Palace courtyard. Palazzo Ducale, Venice. The dates of Rizzo's *Adam* and *Eve* are uncertain, with scholars arguing for dates from c. 1470 to the 1490s.

lic's chancellors (see figs. 10.27, 12.10), expose Venice's imperial pretensions.

In the course of its thousand-year history, Venice had produced few architects of importance. Most of the builders who worked there came from other regions, but once in the city, they fell heir to both the splendors of the Byzantine tradition—inevitable, with the basilica of San

15.54. ANTONIO RIZZO. *Eve*. c. 1480? Marble, 6'8½" (2.04 m). The figure is signed on the base: ANTONIO RIZO.



15.55. PIETRO, ANTONIO, and TULLIO LOMBARDO. Tomb of Doge Pietro Mocenigo. 1476–81. Istrian stone, height of the central figure 5'7" (169 cm). SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice. Commissioned by the doge's heirs, Niccolò and Giovanni Mocenigo. The contract stated that the tomb would be the joint work of Pietro and his two sons, but critics have pointed out that certain elements were executed by assistants. The tomb originally featured seventeen figures, but two have been removed and placed elsewhere in the church.

Marco in their midst—and the rich linear complexities of the Flamboyant Gothic style brought from France and Germany. The same combination is found in the architecture that forms the settings for Carpaccio's scenes (see figs. 15.45–15.46): the Byzantine and Gothic blend, clothed with the same rich marble paneling and highlighted by the same Venetian sunlight. Only here and there are Carpaccio's hybrid buildings punctuated by windows or pilasters borrowed from the Florentine Renaissance. These painted structures reflect the first timid appearance of the Renaissance in Venetian architecture, which occurred almost exclusively in structures built by Lombardians.

During the last third of the Quattrocento in Venice, members of the Lombardo family competed for dominance

with Mauro Codussi (c. 1440–1504), another Lombard, from Bergamo. Codussi was in closer touch with the ideas of the central Italian Renaissance than were the Lombardo family, and by the end of the century he had led the way to a truly Venetian Renaissance style in architecture.

A key civic monument, the gateway into Venice's great shipyard, the Arsenale (fig. 15.56), is an early demonstration of the influence of antiquity in Venetian architecture. This grand portal, topped with an enormous representation of the lion of the Venetian Republic, expresses the city's importance as a maritime power. The arched entrance, flanked by columns on high bases, is a reference to ancient Roman triumphal arches, as is appropriate for a building intended to embody the military and economic power of the Venetian state.

Another Venetian landmark, the towering façade of San Zaccaria, was largely the creation of Codussi (fig. 15.57). The interior of the church was Gothic in design, and the pre-existing lowest story of the façade by Antonio Gambello, essentially a pedestal with rectangular paneling, some of it protruding as buttresses, established a complexity from which Codussi could hardly vary. On this he superimposed stories in the new classical style, exploiting by their projections and recessions the play of light so important in Venetian paintings of the period. He continued the buttresses upward, using them to divide the second-story arcade into three segments, and on the third and fifth stories the buttresses are articulated by paired, free-standing Corinthian columns. The proliferation of windows of differing sizes and proportions, the lack of alignment between the second and third



15.56. ANTONIO GAMBELLO (attributed to). Arsenale Gateway. 1457/8–1460. Brick and Istrian stone; the four unfluted columns are reused materials from an earlier structure, as are the marble capitals. Commissioned by Doge Pasquale Malipiero and the Avogadori di Comun (Leone Molin, Albano Capello, and Marc'Antonio Contarini).

The Venetian shipyard was perhaps the largest industrial complex in Europe at this time, employing several thousand men in a system that has been compared to the modern production line. The gateway has been enriched with later additions, including the female saint at the peak of the pediment, the bronze doors, the enclosed terrace in front with its statuary, and the lions to either side.

floors, and the stumpy proportions of the Corinthian colonnade on the fifth floor offer a lively variety alien to the Albertian tradition. Yet it is from Alberti's idea for the Malatesta Temple (see fig. 10.3) that Codussi derived the arched pediment at the top and the quarter-circles that mask the roof line on either side. In its complexity and manipulation of light Codussi's solution is profoundly Venetian and yet at the same time it asserts that classicizing columns and entablatures are the proper architectural vocabulary. After passing through Codussi's Renaissance resolution, it is a surprise to enter the Gothic interior. Finding Giovanni Bellini's late altarpiece there (see fig. 15.44), however, returns us to the world of Renaissance classicism.

The unique style of Venetian architecture is also evident in the design of the façade of the Scuola Grande di San Marco (fig. 15.58), where the lions of St. Mark and, therefore, of Venice, seem to be emerging from *trompe l'oeil* chambers that flank the entrance. The façade was begun by Pietro and Tullio Lombardo in the late 1480s and completed by Mauro Codussi in the 1490s. While the architectural motifs here are almost exclusively drawn from ancient models, the effect is profoundly Venetian and unlike works of architecture produced anywhere else on the peninsula. The repetition of round arches on different levels and in different sizes is ultimately a homage to the domes of San Marco, while the decoration along the roofline seems designed to draw attention upward, toward the beautiful sky and clouds that so often hover over the city.

The Renaissance façade that Codussi designed and built for the Grand Canal palazzo of the powerful Loredan



15.57. MAURO CODUSSI and ANTONIO GAMBELLO.
Façade, S. Zaccaria, Venice. Second half of fifteenth century.
Gambello designed only the lowest story, with its reliefs of bust-length figures and inlaid pink panels; the upper part by Codussi is completely executed in white marble. The later marble figure over the main door, which represents Zaccharias, father of St. John the Baptist, is by Alessandro Vittoria (see p. 647).



15.58. PIETRO LOMBARDO, TULLIO LOMBARDO, and MAURO CODUSSI. Façade, Scuola Grande di San Marco. 1485–90s. White marble with inlays in *verde antico* (green marble) and porphyry, a rare red stone quarried in Egypt; details of the pilasters and capitals were originally gilded.

family (fig. 15.59) should be compared to the Gothic Ca d'Oro (see fig. 15.8). The culminating example of the Venetian Quattrocento palace and the bridge to the High Renaissance in Venice, Palazzo Loredan offers balance and harmony. Unlike the Ca d'Oro, or the façades of San Zaccaria and the Scuola Gronde di San Marco, here a single window pattern appears on all three floors and the overall design is strictly symmetrical. The work was completed after Codussi's death by the Lombardo family but the design is Codussi's, and in the relationship between columns and windows he achieved a balance and maturity of proportion that had eluded him at San Zaccaria. He derived the double-light windows from the Florentine Renaissance (see fig. 6.23), but here they are enlarged and

joined to Corinthian columns so that the wall—always so prominent in Florentine palace design—becomes a backdrop. Even the tympanum above the paired windows is pierced by an open oculus, an echo of the lingering tradition of Gothic tracery. The façade seems to consist of a framework around openings, a succession of clusters of columns and colonnettes, with brief intervening spaces of veined marble enlivened by sculpted ornament and porphyry disks. The stories are separated by balconies and rich entablatures, and the whole is crowned by an impressive cornice. The pictorial effects of this Venetian palazzo are in strong contrast to the roughly contemporary Palazzo Strozzi in Florence (see fig. 12.17), where the emphasis is on the forbidding density of the masonry, yet in harmony



15.59. MAURO CODUSSI; completed by the LOMBARDO family. Façade, Palazzo Loredan (now Palazzo Vendramin–Calergi), Venice. Begun c. 1500; completed 1509. Marble, with some colored inlay, including porphyry disks. Commissioned by the Loredan family.

and balance, they are surprisingly similar. Like the other palace façades along the Grand Canal, the Palazzo Loredan enjoys the advantage of being reflected in the water, from which glittering light reflects back to soften the building's shadows and dematerialize its forms.

## Late Quattrocento Art in Milan

Francesco I, founder of the Sforza dynasty in Milan, was a successful general who married the illegitimate daughter of Filippo Maria Visconti. Three years after her death without male issue in 1447, Francesco abolished the revived Milanese Republic and assumed the hereditary dukedom. His son, Galeazzo Maria, duke from 1466 to



15.60. VINCENZO FOPPA. *Crucifixion.* 1456. Panel, 26¾ × 15" (68 × 38 cm). Galleria dell'Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.

1476, was tyrannical and cruel—and an insatiable patron of the arts. After his murder in 1476, when he left a son too young to govern, the reins of government were taken over by his brother, Ludovico il Moro, who was declared duke in 1494. Ludovico became one of the most enlightened of Renaissance rulers and patrons of art, but unfortunately the magnificent structures he built are now largely transformed or destroyed and his art collections almost entirely dispersed. His expulsion from the dukedom by the French in 1499 and his death in a French prison marked the end of a brilliant era.

## Vincenzo Foppa

Perhaps the most original Lombard painter of the Quattrocento was Vincenzo Foppa (c. 1428–1515) from Brescia, east of Milan. The relationship of his earliest dated work, the *Crucifixion* of 1456 (fig. 15.60), to Quattrocento art elsewhere is clear. The embracing arch and imperial profile portraits in the spandrels, for example, show his adaptation of classicized architecture and motifs. The pose of the bad thief and the treatment of the background landscape betray a knowledge of Jacopo Bellini (see fig. 15.11), and the influence of the predella of Mantegna's San Zeno altarpiece (see fig. 15.21) is perhaps evident. The muscular vigor of the bodies and the violence of the expressions and poses, however, are typical of Foppa's style, the expressive impact of the scene evolving from the manner in which he contrasts the suffering of the two thieves with the calm serenity of the figure of Christ. The painting demonstrates how quickly Renaissance innovations infiltrated Lombardy, and how profoundly an artist outside the centers of Renaissance development could adapt its possibilities to his own expressive needs.

## Filarete

Antonio Averlino (c. 1400–after 1465) was a Florentine sculptor and architect who adopted the name Filarete (from the Greek, "love of virtue"). In 1445 his set of bronze and silver doors commissioned by Pope Eugenius IV was installed at Old St. Peter's; they are in use today on the current structure. Filarete left Rome and sought employment in Milan where, in the early 1450s, he began working for Francesco Sforza. His ideas, founded on those of Alberti, came into conflict with the conservatism of local Gothic builders, a fact that doomed most of his projects from the start.

Filarete's treatise on architecture lays out many ambitious Renaissance schemes. The only major project undertaken from the treatise was the Ospedale Maggiore (Main Hospital) for Milan, the practical and theoretical aspects of which Filarete described in detail. In spite of later
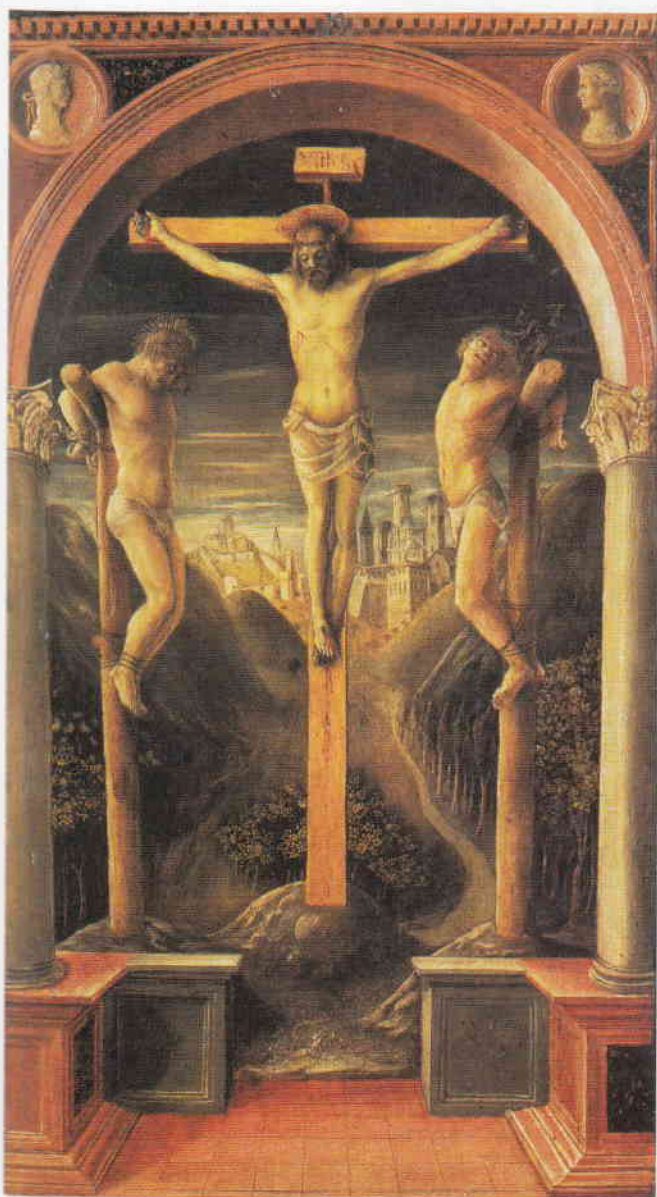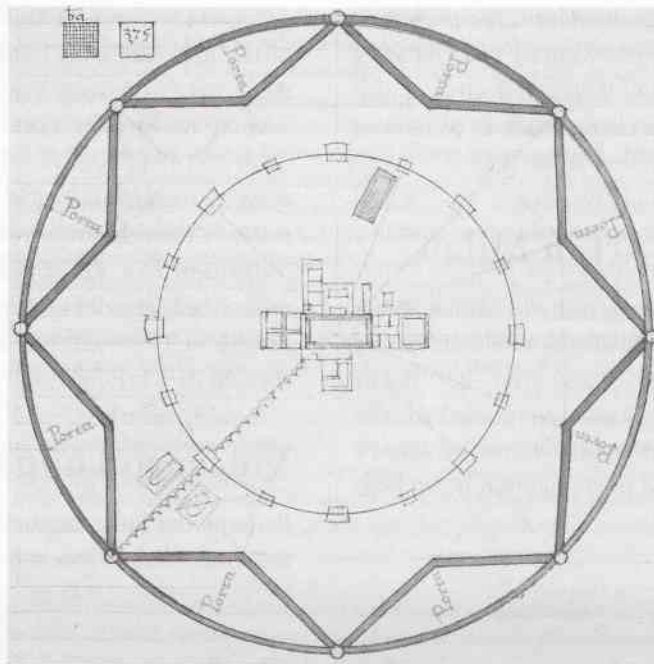
15.61. ANTONIO FILARETE. Plan of Sforzinda. c. 1457–64. Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco Sforza. Filarete presented his treatise on architecture and city planning, in which this plan was illustrated and described, to both Piero de' Medici in Florence and Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan. Where Filarete expected that Sforzinda would be built is unknown.

alterations and damage from aerial bombardments, the building still exists. Filarete also proposed a new island city, named Sforzinda after the ruling family of Milan (fig. 15.61). The exterior walls were to be shaped like an eight-pointed star, with the palace of the prince and a nucleus of public buildings in the center, in true Albertian style. Such a centralized city was not finally carried out until the close of the sixteenth century in the plan for Livorno, designed by Bernardo Buontalenti for Grand Duke Ferdinand I de' Medici, and that for Amsterdam. Nevertheless, the imprint of Filarete's ideas is evident in projects commissioned by Ludovico il Moro, including the villa, castle, farms, and central square of Vigevano, built by Bramante, and a system of canals—some still in use—in Milan.

## Quattrocento Painting in Ferrara

We cannot leave the northern Italian Quattrocento without discussing the school of painting that flourished at Ferrara, a Renaissance center in the lowlands south of the Po River. In the thirteenth century the city and surrounding area came under the control of the Este family, who became dukes of Ferrara and ruled there until 1598. During this period of prosperity, the Este dukes, especially

Niccolò III (1384–1441) and Lionello (1404–1450), commissioned works from important foreign artists, including Antonio Pisanello, Jacopo Bellini, Leonbattista Alberti, Piero della Francesca, Andrea Mantegna, and the Fleming Rogier van der Weyden. The local school that began to emerge about 1450 was influenced by these visitors from abroad, but the Ferrarese artists seem to have been determined to be independent, and a distinctive Ferrarese style soon developed.

The oldest of three important Ferrarese painters was Cosmè Tura (c. 1430–1495), who developed a personalized variant on the Early Renaissance style. The central panel of his Roverella altarpiece, a towering *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Angels* (fig. 15.62), is startling in its combination of sculptural intensity and unexpected color combinations. The Renaissance architectural elements, for example, alternate between green and pink, while the shell above the Virgin's throne is surprisingly fluid in design. At the top of the throne, statues of the symbols of the four Evangelists join winged *putti* and cornucopias from which dangle bunches of grapes. The capitals to the sides are original inventions; incised lines on the surface of the panel reveal that Tura used the same cartoon, reversed, to create these decorations. On the steps of this

15.62. COSMÈ TURA. *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Angels*, from the Roverella altarpiece. c. 1475–76. Panel, 7'10" × 3'4" (2.39 × 1 m). National Gallery, London. Commissioned by members of the Roverella family, perhaps Niccolò and Filiasio, for their family chapel in S. Giorgio Fuori le Mura, Ferrara. The media used by Tura for this altarpiece included a sophisticated application of oil over an egg tempera underpainting. The dismembered altarpiece (see fig. 15.63) was partially destroyed by mortar fire in 1709. Originally it was more than 13 feet high and had a predella with round paintings depicting scenes from the life of Christ. The only surviving side panel features a portrait that has been identified as Cardinal Bartolommeo Roverella being introduced to the Virgin by Saints Paul and Maurelius. The inscription on the organ in the foreground is damaged, but a chronicler writing after 1709 related it to a couplet that reads: "Arise boy [Christ], the Roverella family are knocking outside. Let entry be given them. The Law says 'knock, you shall be admitted.'" An early description states that a figure in the lost left panel was shown knocking; perhaps this was Lorenzo Roverella, who died in 1474 and is buried at San Giorgio in a tomb dated 1476.

fantastic structure angels play viols and strum lutes. Below, an angel plays an organ while another works its bellows. The crowded space is characteristic of Tura's work, as are the contorted, strangely mesmerizing shapes. Instead of pilasters at the sides, the throne has the tablets of the Ten Commandments in abbreviated Hebrew. This inclusion is an unusual touch, and a recent analysis of the painting proposes that the full meaning of the Roverella altarpiece is best understood in the context of certain conflicts between Jews and Christians in late Quattrocento Italy.

Northern Italian painters and sculptors were often unrestrained in expressing grief, as in Tura's large *Pietà* from the summit of this same altarpiece (fig. 15.63). We look upward into a barrel vault that repeats the one seen in the panel below. The body of the dead Christ is spread across the Virgin's knees, his arms held out by lamenting figures. The emotional impact of this crowded grouping is inescapable. The parallel between the image of the sleeping baby Jesus below and the dead Christ, again on his mother's lap above, gives added meaning to each scene.

Tura was appointed court artist for the Este family in 1458, and in that capacity he produced secular decora-

tions. In 1481, for example, it is documented that he painted four "naked women" to decorate the *studio* (study) of Duke Ercole d'Este. In 1490 Tura wrote a letter to his patron that reveals some of the difficulties of being an artist in Quattrocento Italy, complaining that he has not been paid for certain works and asking the duke to intervene on his behalf:

Truly, Illustrious Prince and my Most Excellent Lord, my industry does not support me. I do not know how I shall be able to live and survive in this manner since I do not have the occupation or resources to sustain myself along with my household, apart from what I have earned from my daily labor and skill in painting. I find myself gravely ill with a sickness from which I cannot recover without considerable time and expense, as perhaps Your Excellency knows. I tell you this having six years ago made an altarpiece at my own expense in gold, colors, and painting for Francesco Nasello, secretary to Your Excellency, ... and from which sixty ducats is owing to me; and having similarly painted a Saint Anthony of Padua and certain other things for the most Reverend and Illustrious Monsignor of Adria, for which remains a debt to
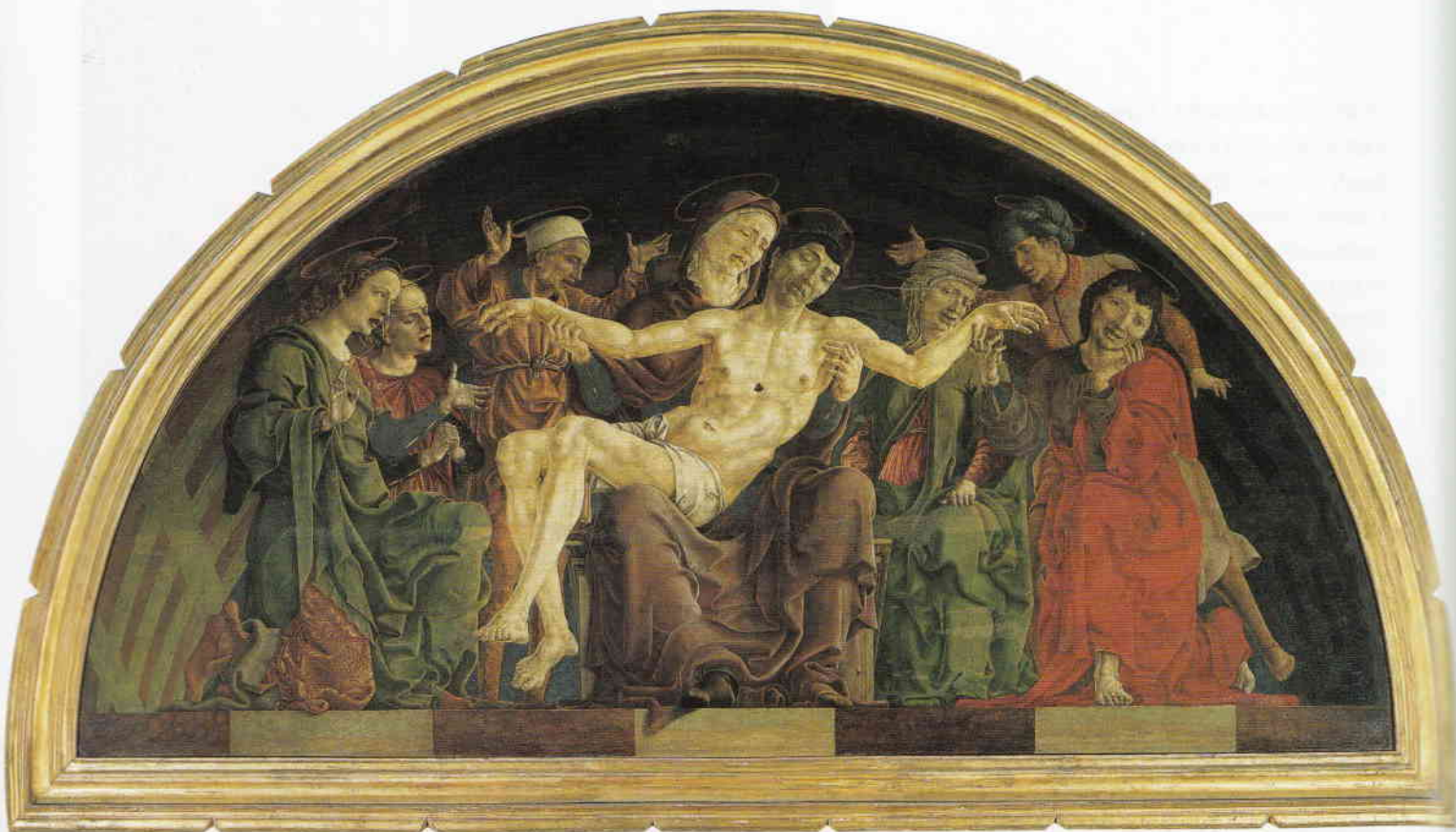


15.63. COSMÈ TURA. *Pietà*, from summit of the Roverella altarpiece (see fig. 15.62). c. 1475–76. Panel, 4'4" × 8'9" (1.3 × 2.7 m). The Louvre, Paris.

me of twenty-five ducats. I cannot receive satisfaction, which is certainly neither honest nor fair, all the more so because they are powerful and very well have the means to settle and I am poor and helpless and cannot afford to lose the reward of my labor. For this reason I ... implore you, as that one who has graciously deigned to give me satisfaction for the works I did for him, to deign in whatever honorable and appropriate way you see fit to have the aforementioned instructed to give me full satisfaction without more words and delays.... Ferrara, 9 January 1490.

> Your excellency's most faithful servant,
> Cosmus Pictor [Cosmè the Painter]

A second leading Ferrarese painter was Francesco del Cossa (c. 1435–c. 1477), son of a stonemason. His style is exemplified in his *John the Baptist* (fig. 15.64) from the Griffoni altarpiece. In his paintings Cossa shows a special interest in rocky landscapes and in the stones, carved and otherwise, of which architecture is built, and an affinity between naturally formed rocks and stone structures is evident here in the landscape of rocky pinnacles, open arcades, and natural bridges supporting turreted castles and domed churches stacked in impossible positions. A cloudless blue sky and brilliant light expose this stony world and all the objects in it, whether carved by nature or human fantasy, with relentless clarity. Cossa's magical intensity seeps into every detail—from the rosaries hanging from rings around a pole to the crumpled scroll bearing John's words, "Behold, a voice crying in the wilderness," and the patterns of the saint's voluminous drapery— explaining why his bizarre paintings served as models for certain Surrealists during the 1930s.

The most remarkable surviving project of the Ferrarese artists is the fresco cycle lining the Sala dei Mesi (Hall of the Months), the main hall in the Palazzo Schifanoia at Ferrara, a hunting lodge enlarged by Duke Borso d'Este



**15.64. FRANCESCO DEL COSSA.** *John the Baptist*, from the Griffoni altarpiece. 1473. Panel, 44⅛ × 21⅝" (112.1 × 54.9 cm). Brera Gallery, Milan. Commissioned by Floriano Griffoni for S. Petronio, Bologna.

15.67. ERCOLE DE' ROBERTI. *St. John the Baptist*. c. 1478–80.
Panel, 21¼ × 12¼" (54 × 31 cm). Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

beginning around 1465 (figs. 15.65–15.66). The frescoes
are related to the calendar illustrations that appear fre-
quently in Northern European manuscripts, but here there
is a special emphasis, as we might expect, on Borso d'Este
as a wise ruler. The program, devised by a still-unidentified
humanist, is complex. Each month is represented in the top
register by the triumphal cart of the ancient deity who
presided over that month, with the signs of the related
zodiac in the middle zone and the courtly activities and
practical labors appropriate for that month at the bottom.
Portraits of Borso and his courtiers appear in various
scenes on the lower level. The frescoes demonstrate the
brilliance of Ferrarese coloring and the inventiveness of the
local painters in their interpretation of subject matter. The
leading master was apparently Cossa, with limited partici-
pation by Ercole de' Roberti and other, anonymous artists.

In Cossa's *April* (fig. 15.66), Venus rules from a kind of
barge drawn by swans. On either bank, elegantly dressed
ladies and gentlemen indulge in amorous courtship that is
parodied by white rabbits. Presiding over the couples are
the Three Graces at the upper right; like Botticelli's Graces
in the *Primavera* (see fig. 13.23), their composition reveals
that an ancient source, written or visual, was the model
(see pp. 338–39). Like the other frescoes, this scene resem-
bles a continuous tapestry replete with fascinating details
and an occasional extension into illusionistic depth.

Ercole de' Roberti (1456–1496) is the youngest of the
three painters of Quattrocento Ferrara discussed here. His
emaciated and mystical *St. John the Baptist* (fig. 15.67)
rises above rocks that are similar to those of Tura and
Cossa, but their scale and substance are reduced. The ledge
on which John stands seems to melt away as we watch,
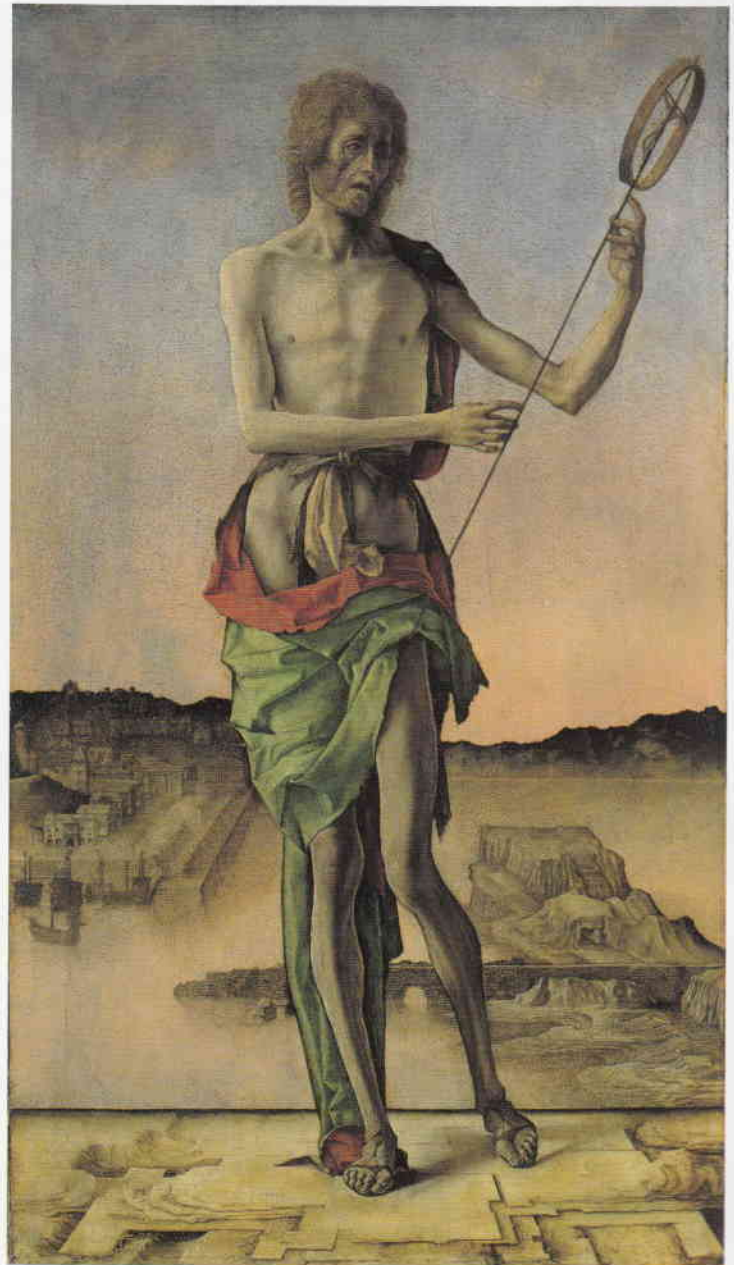
and the sea mists that rise around the promontory, port,
and ship behind him have a rosy Bellinesque glow. The
foreground and background are separated by a line that
makes the latter look almost like a backdrop. Perhaps
Roberti intended to leave this relationship unresolved; the
resulting ambiguity is part of the mystery of this haunting
image. The figure, with its subtle *contrapposto*, and the
landscape reveal Roberti's understanding of earlier Renais-
sance developments at the same time that he subverted the
naturalistic impulses of the earlier period to focus on
expressing intense emotion and psychological character.

# North Italian Terra-Cotta Sculpture

The groupings of life-sized terra-cotta figures often found in northern Italian churches represent a popular devotional type that has been largely ignored by scholars. When the polychromy is well preserved, as in the example shown here by Guido Mazzoni (1450–1518; fig. 15.68), the naturalistic effect is powerful. To come upon a group like this today in a darkened chapel is like chancing upon a real event or experience, giving us some notion of the impact the group must have had when it first created. The greatest number of these vignettes show the scene of the Lamentation after Christ is taken down from the cross. Less common are representations of the period immediately after the Nativity, when the Christ Child is being worshipped, as in this example. The figure on the left here is probably a portrait of the donor, who guaranteed by his commission that he would be represented in this attitude of adoration for many centuries. Both the craggy realism of his portrait and the delicate smoothness of the face of the Virgin are characteristic of Quattrocento developments. This emphasis on emotion and individual physiognomy will, however, soon be challenged by the serenity and order of High Renaissance art.



15.68. GUIDO MAZZONI. *Adoration of the Child.* 1485–89. Polychromed terra-cotta, life-sized. Modena Cathedral. Commissioned by Francesco Porrini for his family chapel at Sta. Cecilia, Modena.

TITIAN,
*Sacred and Profane Love*
(detail of fig. 19.12).

# THE ORIGINS OF
# THE HIGH RENAISSANCE

The period that we now call the High Renaissance has its origins in the works of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), who was born seven years after Botticelli and Perugino and five years before Filippino Lippi, all of whose styles belong indisputably to the Quattrocento. Moreover, all of Leonardo's most important artistic achievements were completed or well under way before the death of Filippino, the first of the three to die, in 1504. The fact that we tend to think of Leonardo as a Cinquecento artist and to speak of him together with Michelangelo, born twenty-three years later in 1475, or with Raphael, born thirty-one years later in 1483, indicates his revolutionary importance as the creator of the earliest, Florentine phase of the High Renaissance.

## Leonardo da Vinci

The shopworn remark about persons who seem to be "ahead of their time" can be taken as a statement of fact in the case of Leonardo. He was ahead of his time not only in painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also in engineering, military science, botany, anatomy, geology, geography, hydraulics, aerodynamics, and optics, to mention only some of the branches of knowledge in which he made crucial and, in some cases, original discoveries. Leonardo was inspired to make innovations in both art and science because of his conviction that the two were intimately interrelated. He did not consider them interchangeable: science seems for him to have been a pragmatic investigation of nature, while art was an expression of beauty. In

both his artistic and scientific activities Leonardo rejected authority and explored the natural world independently, without traditional prejudices or the restrictions put on investigations by religious belief. In an era when the revived authority of antiquity competed with that of Christianity, he had little respect for either source. It seems that for Leonardo final authority emanated from a single source: the human eye. He maintained that no faculty was nobler than that of sight. No text, no matter what its pretensions to divine revelation or philosophical authority, could block the evidence of sight or impede the process of induction based on sight. As he wrote in his notebooks:

> Now do you not see that the eye embraces the beauty of the whole world? It is the lord of astronomy and the maker of cosmography; it counsels and corrects all the arts of humanity; it moves men to the different parts of the world; it is the prince of mathematics, its sciences are certain; it has measured the heights and sizes of the stars, it has found the elements and their locations ... has generated architecture, perspective, and the divine art of painting. Oh most excellent thing above all others created, what peoples, what tongues shall be those that can fully describe your true operation? This is the window of the human body, through which it mirrors its way and brings to fruition the beauty of the world, by which the soul is content to stay in its human prison.

We know a great deal about what Leonardo thought from his writings. The thousands of surviving pages range from quick jottings to extended analyses. Although he

*Opposite:* 16.1. MICHELANGELO. *David.* 1501–4. Marble, height of figure without pedestal 17' (5.18 m); height of figure with pedestal 23' (7 m). Accademia, Florence. Commissioned by the Opera del Duomo, Florence, to be placed on a buttress below the dome.

never assembled them into any sort of order, Leonardo's notes crackle with ideas and observations, some not to be made again by others, much less systematized into a coherent body of theory, for decades or even centuries. Seldom in his pages do we encounter a classical name, in contrast to Alberti and Ghiberti, for example, who were always citing classical authors or artists. Only infrequently do we find references to God, and occasionally we meet with caustic comments on organized Christianity (for example, "Why are we supposed to worship the Son when all the churches are dedicated to the Mother?"), but nature is mentioned again and again, and Leonardo's sketchy views of mountains (fig. 16.2) are among the earliest known studies of this subject.

Leonardo's notebooks also reveal his detachment from his fellow human beings and their ways. He admired the human body as a work of nature but somehow felt that humans did not deserve so fine an instrument; he called them "sacks for food" and "fillers-up of privies." In spite of his conversational gifts, in his writings there is no hint that he ever cared deeply for another human being. Florentine though he was, he could detach himself sufficiently from the concerns of his native republic to work for Ludovico Sforza, duke of Milan, or even for Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, against whose armies the Florentines were trying to preserve their liberties.

Leonardo may have derived some of his aloofness from the circumstances of his birth, for he was born the illegitimate child of a notary in the little town of Vinci, about 20 miles west of Florence. At an early age he was taken from his peasant mother, about whom we know next to nothing, and brought up by his father and his father's wife.

A notary in Italy verifies the legality of contracts, takes a percentage from both contracting parties, and can make himself prosperous, which Leonardo's father seems to have done. But Leonardo's life was clouded by his illegitimacy, which brought with it legal disadvantages. In addition, he was left-handed, which had a distinctly unfavorable connotation (although the Italian expression for "left-handed" is the mild word *mancino*, the term for "left" is *sinistro*). Leonardo drew and wrote from right to left, for his own benefit, and scholars often use a mirror to read his writings.

Over and over in Leonardo's writings one encounters the lament, "Who will tell me if anything was ever finished?" It is true that his pursuit of the elusive aspects of nature was never finished; nor were a number of his works, and few of the finished ones survive in anything like the form he intended. Some of Leonardo's contemporaries complained that his scientific and mechanical interests kept him from his activities as an artist. A fuller picture of his interests and style can be gained from his drawings, both the studies intended for specific paintings and sculptures and the sketches that illustrate almost every page of his notes.

**THE DRAWINGS.** Not even the smallest of living things is neglected in Leonardo's drawings. A cat, an insect, a flower—each is worthy of prolonged study. In a drawing of plants including a star of Bethlehem (fig. 16.3), for instance, Leonardo rendered the shapes of the leaves accurately but was also concerned with the rhythm of the plant's growth and the elusive qualities of natural life and motion: the leaves seem to unfold before us, like time-lapse photographs of plants growing and blossoming. Leonardo could move from the microcosm—the smallest detail—to the macrocosm—the universal—with the ease of Netherlandish masters such as Jan van Eyck, whose work he may have studied. During his stay in Milan, he climbed the slopes of the nearby Alps and recorded what he saw, noticing, for example, fossilized shells embedded in sedimentary rocks. Having calculated the time required for nature to produce such a phenomenon and carry the shells to such heights, he concluded that the world could not have been created in 4004 BCE, as theologians at the time maintained.

In his notebooks, Leonardo described the immense power of the artist:

If the painter wishes to see beauties that charm him, it lies in his power to create them, and if he wishes to see monstrosities that are frightful, ridiculous, or truly pitiable, he is lord and God thereof; and if he wishes to generate sites and deserts, shady and cool places in hot weather he can do so, and also warm places in cold weather. If he wishes from the high summits of the mountains to uncover the great countrysides, and if he wishes after them to see the horizon of the sea, he is lord of it, and if from the low valleys he wishes to see the high mountains, or from the high mountains the low valleys and beaches, and in effect that which is in the universe for essence, presence, or imagination, he has it first in his mind and then in his hands, and these are of such excellence that in equal time they generate a proportionate harmony in a single glance, as does nature.

Leonardo displays such an ability in a red chalk drawing (see fig. 16.2) depicting a landscape that stretches into a cloudy Alpine valley and then above storms to snowcapped summits. No earlier artist had so successfully captured both the vastness of the natural world and its transitory nature.

Aside from the satisfaction that such studies gave him, they assisted Leonardo in promoting one of his favorite causes—the superiority of the painter. God has often been called an artist and the process of creation compared to artistic activity. Leonardo reversed the metaphor and saw the artist's creativity as analogous to that of God: "The deity that invests the science of the painter functions in such a way that the mind of the painter is transformed into



16.3. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Star-of-Bethlehem and Other Plants.* c. 1505–8. Pen and red pencil, 7¾ × 6¼" (19.8 × 16 cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
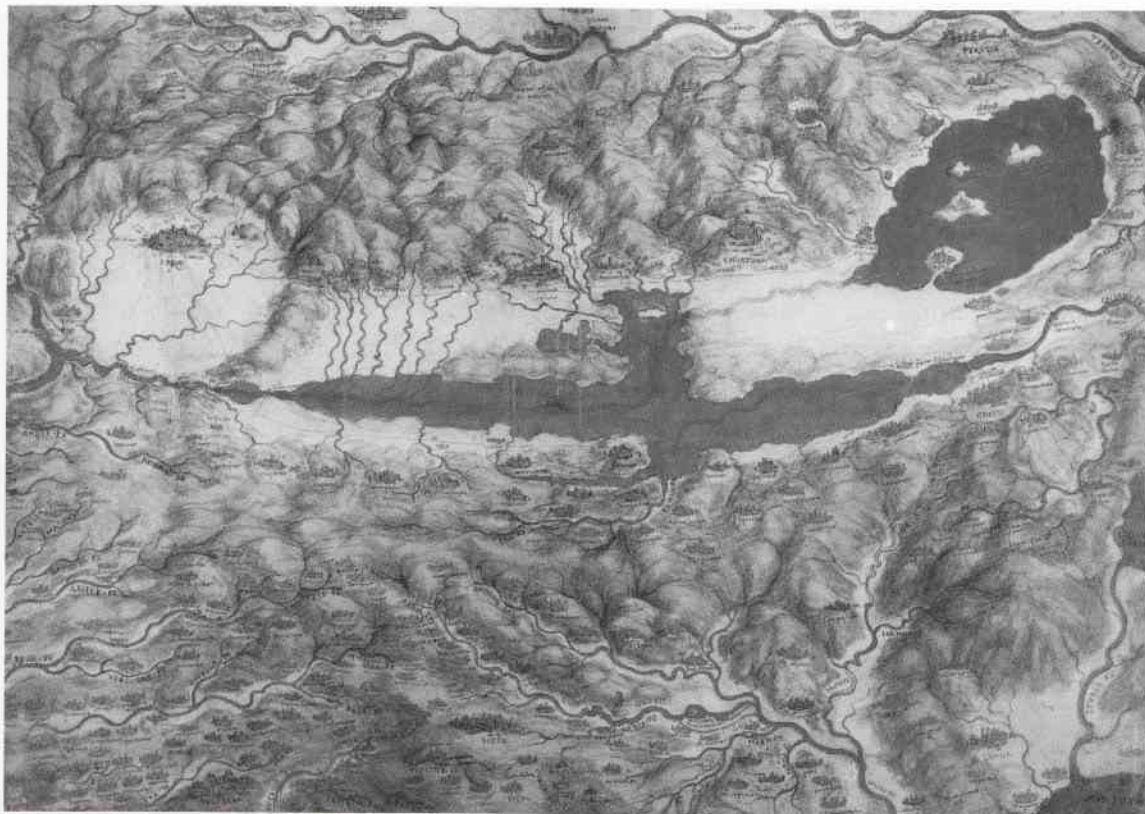
16.4. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Bird's-eye View of the Chiana Valley, Showing Arezzo, Cortona, Perugia, and Siena.* c. 1502–3. Pen and ink and color, 13¼ × 19⅛" (33.8 × 48.8 cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

a copy of the divine mind, since it operates freely in creating many kinds of animals, plants, fruits, landscapes, countrysides, ruins, and awe-inspiring places."

In Leonardo's day, the Liberal Arts still excluded painting in spite of earlier efforts to include it (see p. 25). In his *Treatise on Painting* (compiled after his death by his pupil Francesco Melzi), Leonardo argued at length not only for the inclusion of painting among the Liberal Arts but also for its precedence over poetry or music, since these depend on the ear, and the eye is the superior organ. He argued that it is better to be deaf than blind, and pointed out that when the last note of a song has died away, the music is over and must be played again to exist, while a picture is constantly there. He asked if anyone ever traveled a great distance to read a poem, while pictures are the goal of many pilgrimages.

After many similar arguments, Leonardo turned to sculpture, which he was determined to exclude from the Liberal Arts or, at least, place in a rank below that of painting. The elegantly dressed painter could sit in a studio, with soft breezes entering from the gardens through the open windows, and listen to music while working without physical strain. The sculptor must attack the stone with hammer and chisel, sweating and covered with marble dust that mingles with sweat to form a gritty paste. The sculptor must also endure being deafened by the noise of hammer and chisel on stone.

Leonardo's interests were also practical; many of his drawings are studies of drainage, irrigation, water transportation, and military campaigns. He made a number of bird's-eye views showing a large area of central Italy. One vista (fig. 16.4) stretches from Arezzo at the left to Perugia at the extreme upper right, with Siena just to the left of lower center; Leonardo's knowledge of the terrain, which enabled him to make what is in reality an aerial view, is most impressive. This drawing was apparently made as part of a project to divert water into the Arno from a lake in the central Chiana Valley, but it might also have had some purpose in Cesare Borgia's military campaigns. Leonardo was also able, without the benefit of surveying instruments, to draw relief maps in the modern sense, in which the forms are shaded according to their altitude.

In his treatise *On Architecture*, the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius described how an ideally proportioned human figure would fit within both a circle, with the navel at the center, and a square. Earlier architects had tried unconvincingly to fit a human figure into such a scheme, but it was Leonardo who created the most convincing visual representation of Vitruvius's proposal (fig. 16.5).

Leonardo studied the human body as it had never been studied before. His drawings from the nude model—such as one in red chalk (fig. 16.6), a medium that Leonardo was among the first to use—show a new attentiveness to the structure of the body. In his writings he admonished
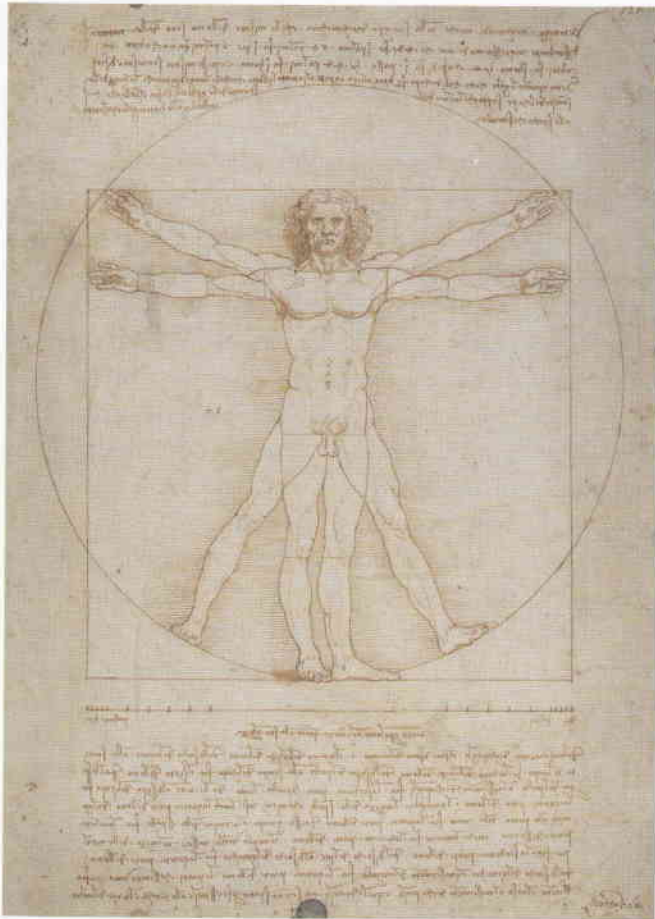
16.5. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Vitruvian Man: Study of the Human Body (Le Proporzione del Corpo Umano)*. c. 1490. Pen and ink, 13½ × 9⅝" (34.3 × 24.5 cm). Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice.
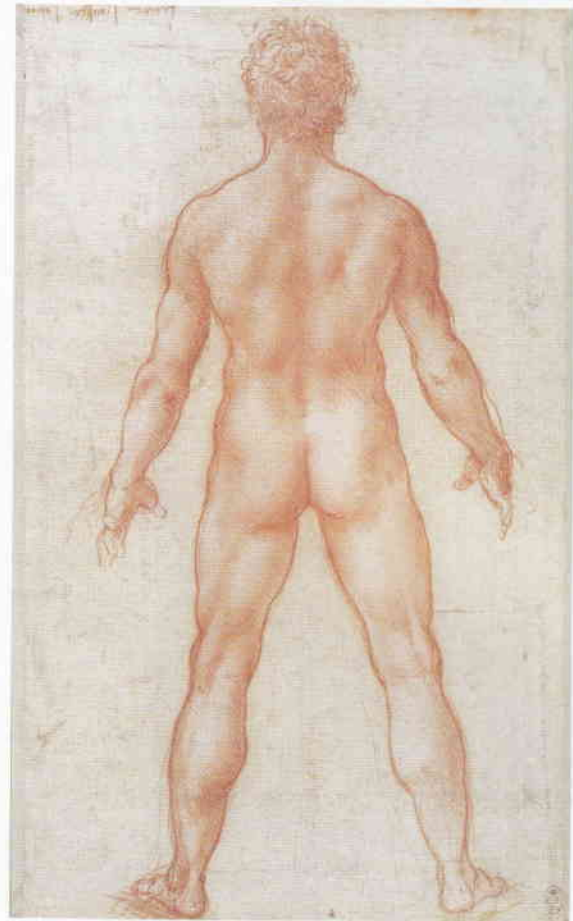


16.6. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Male Nude*. c. 1503–7. Red chalk, 10¾ × 6¼" (27 × 16 cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

artists not to exaggerate the musculature, like those who mistakenly made their figures look like "sacks of nuts" (he was most likely referring to Michelangelo), and in his drawings he emphasized the grace of the figure as a whole. Beginning with his initial anatomical studies in Milan in the mid-1480s, Leonardo carried anatomical dissection to remarkable lengths; it is recorded that he dissected more than thirty bodies. His anatomical drawings, made for the purposes of scientific investigation and demonstration, are usually accompanied by a commentary written as he worked. A drawing that compares the behavior of the muscles of the human leg to that of cords (fig. 16.7) demonstrates how Leonardo sought to understand and record the complexity of human anatomy in a lucid, scientific manner. These drawings are part of Leonardo's exploration of the natural world, and only occasionally are they influenced by tradition at the expense of observation. His analyses of how muscles and tendons are connected to bones and how joints and muscles work in unison had an immediate bearing on the art of the High and Late Renaissance—but they had little effect on Leonardo's own work,

which had come almost to a stop at the time he embarked on his most extensive series of detailed anatomical studies.

Leonardo's drawings for machines are so accurate and the principles involved so well understood that it has been possible for modern engineers to build a number of them. They include refinements on all sorts of known mechanical principles and improvements of pumps, dredges, pulleys, and tackles. His designs for weapons range from crossbows to chariots equipped with rotating scythe blades for dismembering the enemy, and include improvements to artillery as well as, ironically, defenses against his own innovations. Among his inventions are an automotive machine equipped with a differential transmission, a mobile fortress somewhat like a modern tank, and a flying machine—all of which, however, lacked an adequate source of power. Leonardo's optical studies and his invention of machines for grinding concave mirrors resulted in a telescope that was in existence by 1509, a century before Galileo.

Although, as far as we know, none of Leonardo's architectural plans was ever built, his architectural drawings
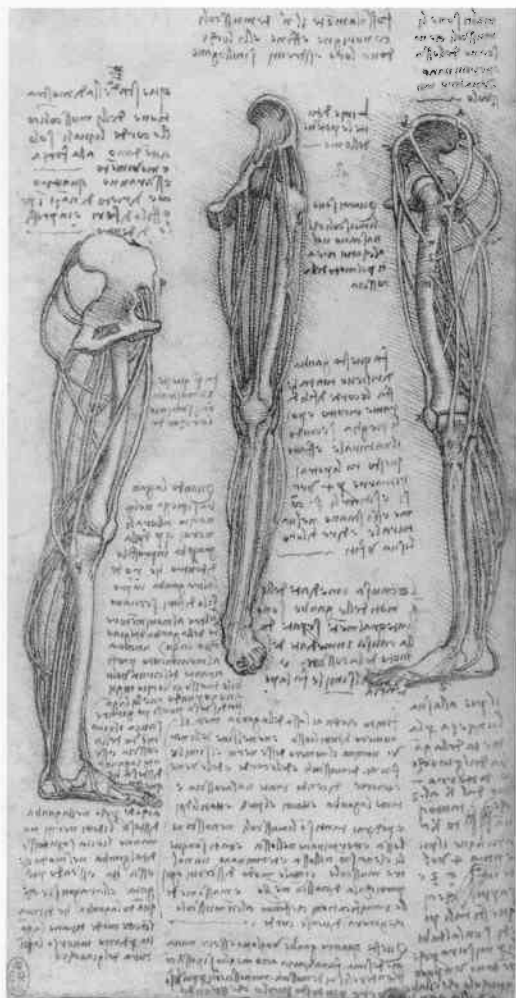
16.7. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Studies of a Left Leg, Showing Bones and Tendons.* c. 1508. Pen and ink, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$" ($21.5 \times 11$ cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

promoted new principles of design that had a far-reaching effect on buildings by others. It might be said that Leonardo founded the High Renaissance style in architecture just as he did in painting. For Leonbattista Alberti, whom the youthful Leonardo may have met and whose ideas he must have known, the best form of building was a centralized structure because, he believed, architecture is founded on nature, and nature, in plants and in the structure of animals, is centralized. In addition, Vitruvius' assertion that the circle was the ideal universal form inspired a number of domed, centrally planned churches during this period (see figs. 12.21–12.23, 17.9–17.10, 17.16, 18.1, 18.54–18.55), the most important of which is New St. Peter's in Rome, by Donato Bramante (see figs. 17.11–17.15) and Michelangelo (see figs. 20.9–20.11). For some of these buildings, Leonardo's architectural plans may have played an influential role.

Vasari complained that Leonardo had wasted time covering sheets of paper with meaningless squares, triangles,

circles, and so forth; what he was probably doing, however, was exploring permutations and combinations of geometric figures as he developed ground plans for buildings. In a number of architectural drawings Leonardo began with ground plans composed of simple geometric elements, and then proceeded, as he moved from right to left, to erect churches in perspective upon these plans. The drawing in figure 16.8 shows an octagonal church surrounded by eight domed circular chapels, each with eight niches; a diamond plan with apses on the sides and towers on the points; and sketches for two more centralized plans. While these plans follow Alberti's principles, the details recall Brunelleschi's dome for Florence Cathedral and his plan for Santo Spirito (see figs. 6.7, 6.19). The end result, however, is something entirely new. The buildings are not juxtapositions of flat planes, as are Brunelleschi's, or inert masses, like Alberti's. They are similar to living organisms that radiate outward from a central core, like the petals of a flower or the rays of a snow crystal. What Leonardo created—and this is the basis of High Renaissance composition in architecture, sculpture, and painting—is a unified
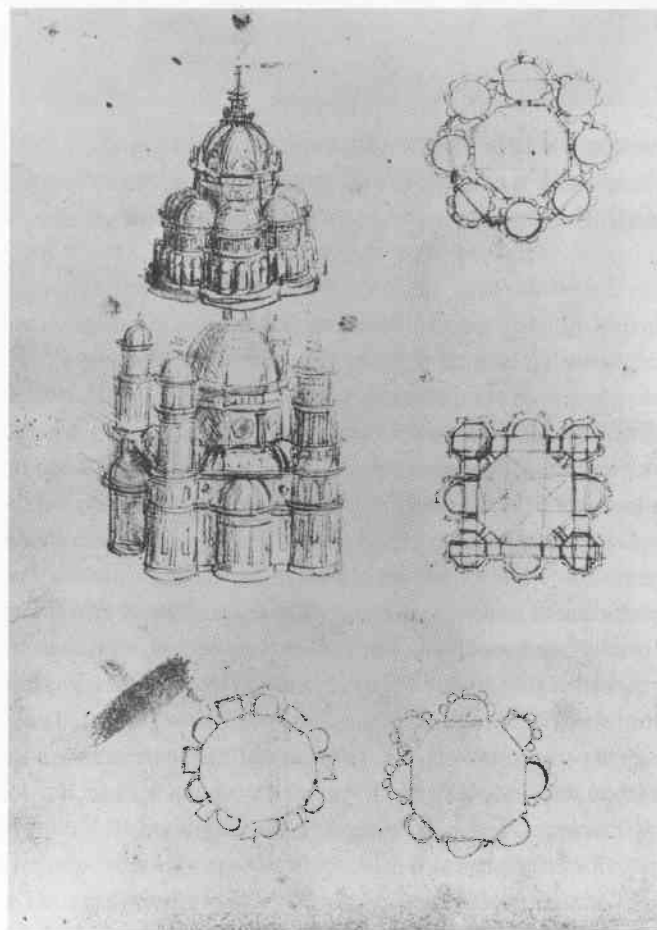


16.8. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Plans and Perspective Views of Domed Churches.* c. 1490. Pen and ink, $9 \times 6\frac{1}{4}$" ($23 \times 16$ cm). Institut de France, Paris.

16.9. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Head of a Youth; Architectural Studies for Sforza Castle.* c. 1495. Red chalk, pen and ink, 9³/₄ × 6³/₄" (25.2 × 17.2 cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

in harbors, and making it a safe means of transportation in rivers and canals. Leonardo must have sat hour after hour studying the patterns produced by a stream as it strikes a body of water, penetrating it in spiral eddies, emerging again on the surface in bubbling circles (fig. 16.10). Sometimes he thrust a board at various angles into a rushing stream and drew the patterns that resulted. He noted that such shapes resemble curls of hair and that the principles of spiral growth in the leaves of plants are found in water as well.

On a page where Leonardo drew the valves of the human heart, he wrote, "Let no one who is not a mathematician read my principles." An important source of Leonardo's scientific investigations and creative imagination was his perception that nature was based on mathematical structures. Faith in the certainty of mathematical principles enabled Leonardo to correlate a broad yet diverse range of studies. The unified, pyramidal composition of the figures in his *Madonna of the Rocks* (see fig. 16.18), for example, and the pyramidal form of the parachute he designed are both related to his
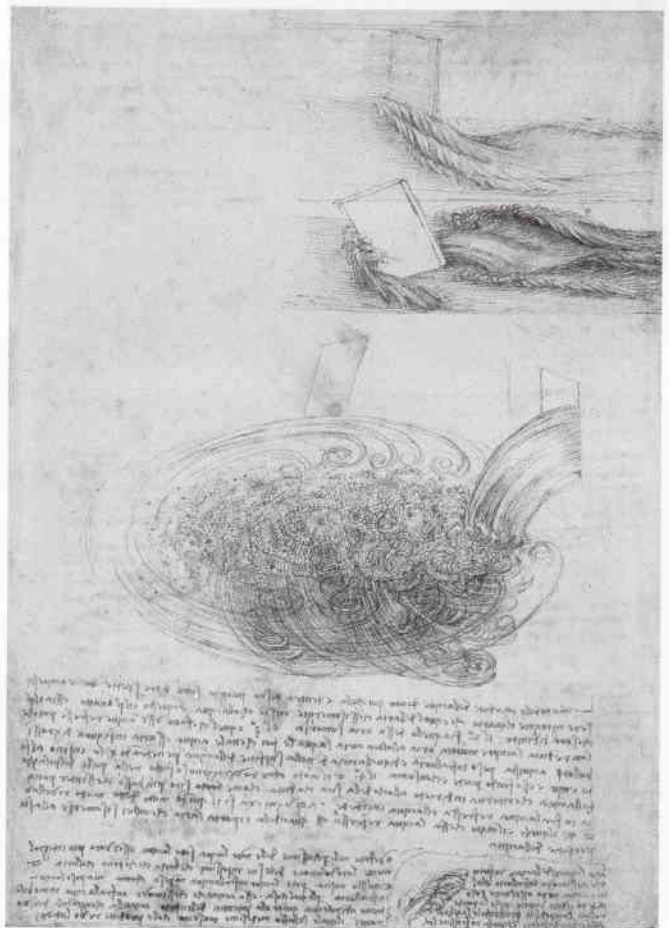


16.10. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Studies of Water Movements.* c. 1505. Pen and ink, 11¹/₂ × 8" (29 × 20 cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

totality that is the product of the dynamic interrelationship of its components. Antonio del Pollaiuolo had hit on something similar in the triangular composition of the archers in his *St. Sebastian* (see fig. 13.7)—or perhaps the youthful Leonardo suggested the notion to him.

Leonardo did not stop at individual buildings or parts of buildings, such as the turret for the Sforza Castle that he drew on the same page as a study of a youth that he later used for an apostle in the *Last Supper* (fig. 16.9). He also designed solutions for the urban problems of his day, including underground canals for the removal of refuse, streets for horse-drawn traffic below elevated walkways, and pedestrian malls designed for human enjoyment. Not one of these was realized at the time, but the ideas are typical of Leonardo's concern with discovering principles of order in the apparent disorder of life.

What fascinated him perhaps more consistently than any other natural phenomenon was the behavior of water. His notebooks abound with schemes for providing it in abundance to cities, rendering it useful and free of obstruction

understanding of the efficiency demonstrated in a tri-cusped heart valve or an arrangement that used three ball bearings. Leonardo's use of the triangle in painting is thus related to his investigations of nature and mechanics, demonstrating that art, as he wrote, "truly is a science."

**EARLY PAINTINGS.** Still unresolved are many questions concerning the interrelationship of Leonardo and his master, Andrea del Verrocchio, with whom he worked as an apprentice for several years around 1470. What does seem clear is the young artist's participation in Verrocchio's *Baptism of Christ* (fig. 16.11; see also fig. 13.12). Most of the painting demonstrates the hand of Verrocchio, but the two kneeling angels contrast with each other: the curly-headed boy at the right still belongs to the world of Fra Filippo Lippi and must be by Verrocchio, but his compan-ion on the left looks out from deep, luminous eyes, his hair streaming from forehead to shoulders in the mysterious swirls of Leonardo's water patterns. And the shimmering



16.11. LEONARDO DA VINCI. Detail of the *Baptism of Christ*, painted with Verrocchio (fig. 13.12). Begun 1468 or 1471; completed c. 1476. Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned for S. Salvi, Florence.

surface of the water behind him, breaking into rapids over shoals, its juncture with the rocks masked by mists, is by the artist who later painted the landscape of the *Mona Lisa* (see fig. 16.29). Possibly the pristine water in the fore-ground should also be attributed to Leonardo.

Another of Leonardo's few remaining works from his early Florentine period is the *Annunciation* (fig. 16.12). Most critics now agree that this was painted when Leonardo was in his early twenties, although some special-ists still argue that he produced it while still a teenager. The Virgin is seated outside a villa with granite walls and per-fectly projected corner quoins of *pietra serena*. Her book rests on a lectern made from a Roman sepulchral urn that is rendered with remarkable detail. Mary acknowledges the angel's message by lifting her hand in a gesture of restrained surprise, but not a trace of emotion disturbs her features. Gabriel kneels before her on a carpet of grass and flowers, each of which is rendered with Leonardo's botan-ical accuracy and sense of rhythmic growth. Over the garden wall, past cypresses and cedars, is a port, with towers, lighthouses, and ships.

That the picture seems decades later than Ghirlandaio's *Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds* (see fig. 13.37) rather than several years earlier reminds us of the revolu-tionary nature of Leonardo's vision and work. The subtlety of the distant atmospheric veil that Leonardo interposes between the background landscape and our eye—which he discusses at length in his writings—is completely new. The blue air becomes denser as we look toward the shimmer-ing mountains, which resemble the Apuan Alps seen from Monte Oliveto. The figures' drapery, solid and sculptural, reveals Leonardo's method as recorded by Vasari (fig. 16.13): after soaking a piece of linen in gesso, Leonardo would arrange it over a small figure and allow it to harden. He would then move it into the appropriate light and draw it with a brush on linen canvas before starting to paint the final picture.

The two faces in the *Annunciation* are without shadow, even though the light that enters the picture with the angel casts a dark shadow on the grass and creates a strong play of shadows in the drapery over Mary's knees. In his notebooks, Leonardo warned against drawing or painting faces in the direct light of the sun, emphasizing the beauty of faces passed in the street in the morning before dawn, or in the early evening, right after sunset. At those times, he noted, you see soft and mysterious expressions, forms that you cannot quite grasp, and the faces take on an inexplicable loveliness and grace. To produce such effects in the studio, he recommended paint-ing all four walls of a courtyard black, stretching a sheet of linen over the courtyard, and then placing the model under this linen so that the light, thus diffused, would illuminate

16.12. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Annunciation*. 1472–75. Panel, 3'2¾" × 7'1½" (98 × 217 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by the monks of the monastery of Monte Oliveto, outside Florence.

the face without sharp reflections or shadows to break up the forms. This is exactly the effect he achieved in his *Annunciation*.



16.13. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Study of Drapery for a Seated Figure*. 1470s. Brush and tempera, 10½ × 10" (26.5 × 25.3 cm). The Louvre, Paris.

These procedures for studying and rendering light reveal that darkness precedes light in his thought. In Leonardo's paintings, form and color must compete for their existence against the surrounding dark and the overlying bluish atmosphere. As a result, color enjoys a new and deeper resonance, form has a more convincing three-dimensional existence, and the darkest shadows merge to give the picture a new kind of unity. This is in sharp contrast to the artificially bright world rendered by most of Leonardo's Florentine contemporaries.

Leonardo's early style is well represented by his revolutionary portrait of the daughter of a wealthy Florentine banker, Ginevra de' Benci, which has an emblem of the sitter painted on the back (figs. 16.14–16.15). The painting is usually dated to the period around 1474, the year when Ginevra married. This is the earliest known painted female portrait in which the sitter turns toward the viewer, and the first to include her hands. Unfortunately, nearly 8 inches were cut off the bottom of the painting sometime before 1780. Although that part of the painting is lost, a drawing that may represent Ginevra's hands survives, and a reconstruction based on the drawing helps us to appreciate how unconventional this portrait must have been. The costume, the hairstyle, and the placement of the hands delicately holding a bouquet of flowers are all similar to those in *Portrait of a Lady with Flowers* (see fig. 13.14), a sculpture created in Verrocchio's workshop at approximately the same time. Ginevra's long fingers remind us that hands such as these were one of the attributes of the perfect

Renaissance woman. Ginevra discreetly avoids our glance, another indication of social refinement in a woman during this period and one that Leonardo decisively ignored when he painted the *Mona Lisa* (see fig. 16.29). The play of light and shadow on Ginevra is restrained, with oil paint making possible the delicate transitions from light to very limited effects of shadow. A recent technical examination has revealed that Leonardo also exploited his medium by using his fingers to blend the colors at the point where the juniper bush meets the distant landscape.



16.14. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Portrait of Ginevra de' Benci* (obverse), c. 1474. Oil on panel; size without reconstruction, 15 × 14⁹⁄₁₆ × ⁷⁄₁₆" (38.1 × 37 × 1.1 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund. Purchased from the Princes of Lichtenstein in 1967. Probably commissioned by Bernardo Bembo, the Venetian ambassador to Florence. Conjectural digital reconstruction including missing lower third (approximate). Digital reconstruction © 2002 Board of Trustees. The lighter portion of the illustration indicates the area that has been reconstructed. Leonardo's technique combined oil glazes with tempera; a pounced cartoon was used to transfer his design for painting. Ginevra, the daughter of a Florentine banker, married in 1474. The juniper branches in the background, the pigment of which has darkened, are a visual reference to the name of Ginevra, which means juniper.



16.15. LEONARDO DA VINCI. Reverse of *Portrait of Ginevra de' Benci*, fig. 16.14. c. 1474. Tempera on panel; size without reconstruction, 15 × 14⁹⁄₁₆ × ⁷⁄₁₆" (38.1 × 37 × 1.1 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund. Conjectural digital reconstruction includes missing lower third (approximate). Digital reconstruction © 2002 Board of Trustees. The lighter portion of the illustration indicates the area that has been reconstructed.

The motto on the scroll reads "Beauty Adorns Virtue." In the Medici circle in Florence, it was a common and accepted courtly activity to express one's love for an unattainable ideal beauty in sonnets and portraiture. Florentine humanists, including Lorenzo de' Medici, wrote poems celebrating Ginevra's beauty. The sonnets were based on a tradition begun by Petrarch in the fourteenth century in the poems he wrote to his beloved Laura.

THE *ADORATION OF THE MAGI*. The *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 16.16), commissioned in March 1481, was left unfinished when Leonardo departed for Milan sometime late in 1481 or early 1482. But unfinished is hardly the proper word for a picture in which there is not a touch of color. What we see is an incomplete underdrawing that has been reinforced with a dark wash to establish the structure of shadows. While the methods used in this underdrawing are revealing in themselves and offer visual proof of the attitudes toward light found in Leonardo's writings, his style at this time would have demanded the same kind of finish and detail that we see in the *Annunciation* (see fig. 16.12).

Leonardo's revolutionary *Adoration* comes only a few years after Botticelli's altarpiece on the same subject for Santa Maria Novella (see fig. 13.18), and probably before the latter's Washington *Adoration* (see fig. 13.20), yet Leonardo's composition offers a sense of unity not found in Botticelli's works. A perspective study for Leonardo's *Adoration* (fig. 16.17) shows that he originally intended to include the ruins and shed of the Botticelli tradition. The main focus here is linear perspective, and the principal

groups of figures do not appear—Leonardo analyzed them separately in other drawings—but the followers of the magi can be seen on the steps and ruins. A camel crouches in front of the steps, and in the background, at the vanishing point, a man tries to maintain his balance on a rearing horse, while another horse kicks backward with both legs. Leonardo may have observed these motifs in Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* (see figs. 11.5–11.6), but these are far from Uccello's geometricized horses; they are as full of uncontrollable energy as the water that fascinated Leonardo, and—like the rushing water—such horses reappeared often in his imagination as symbols of the forces of nature.

In the painting Leonardo omitted the shed and, therefore, its elaborate perspective construction. The ruins remain, abbreviated somewhat—and still in flawless perspective—but now they are relegated to a background position. The arches are broken and the figures and horses surge beneath them. The camel has vanished, and both horses rear on their hind legs as if their riders were in combat. The composition is now unified by the geometry that was so important to Leonardo, with the Madonna



16.16. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Adoration of the Magi*. Begun 1481. Panel, 7'8" × 8'9" (2.33 × 2.66 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by the monks of S. Donato a Scopeto for their monastery.
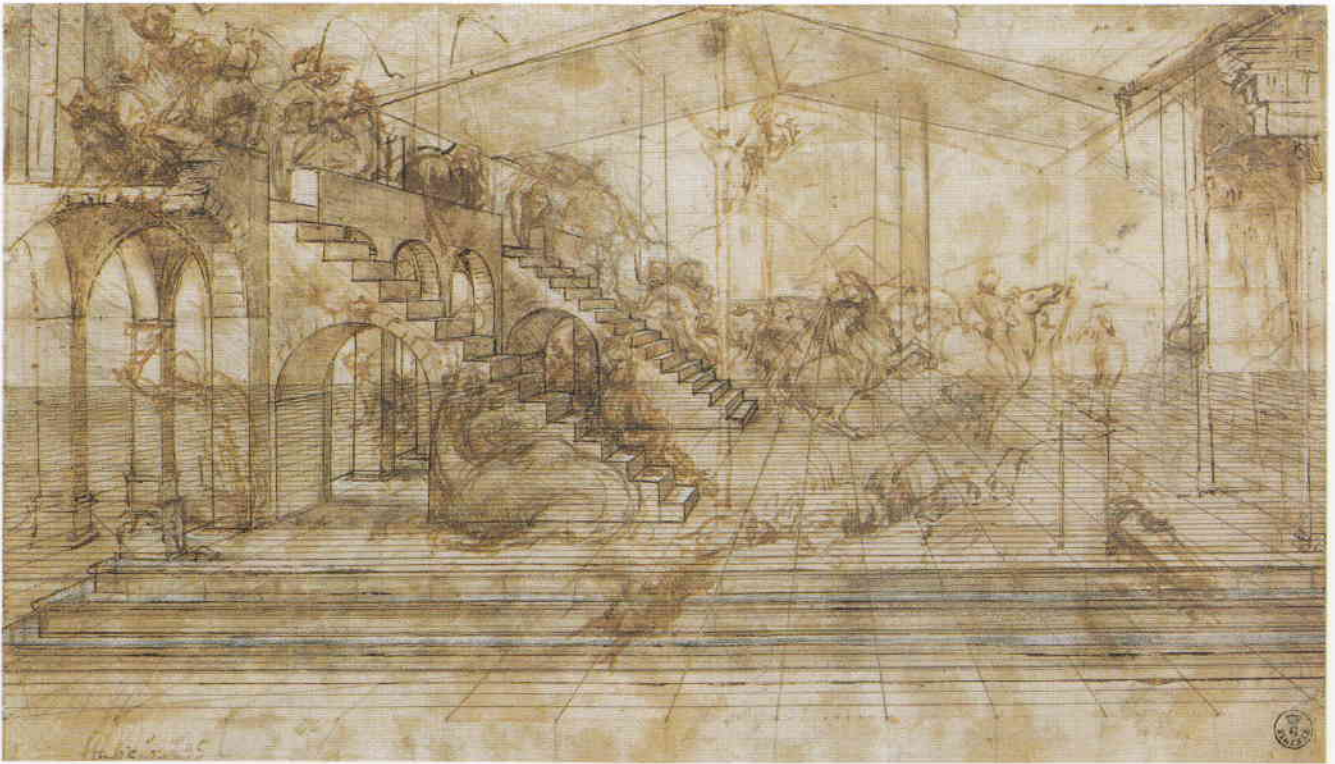
16.17. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Architectural Perspective and Background Figures*, for the *Adoration of the Magi*. c. 1481. Pen and ink, wash, and white, 6½ × 11½" (16.5 × 29 cm). Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

and Child as the apex of a stable pyramid, the base of which is formed by the kings and the surging crowds to the sides, who are encompassed within a semicircle.

The idea that the scene of the Adoration should be crowded with the retinue that accompanied the kings can surely be related to the procession that took place in Florence on January 6 each year. The precedents for Leonardo's painting include Gentile da Fabriano's altarpiece from the 1420s (see fig. 8.2) and those of Botticelli mentioned above. However, Leonardo here demonstrates an interest in the group psychology that results when crowds are drawn together by the electric excitement of an event. Whatever their ostensible subject, in fact, Leonardo's compositions always seem to be expositions of his psychological interests. The yearning that sends the magi to their knees runs like a storm through the crowd of attendants, who are divided into two types: old men with sunken cheeks and eyes and beautiful young boys with flowing locks.

When we observe the technical procedures of earlier painters from unfinished or damaged works or deduce them from pictorial surfaces, we see that they drew contours on white priming and then applied color between these outlines. Leonardo, on the other hand, seems to have started with a dark wash of the sort that created the areas of shadow that were so important in the *Annunciation*.

The light areas—the figures—are the residue, but the darkness has invaded many of them. He then defined the edges of these shadows with the brush. Leonardo's reversal of the traditional roles of light and dark is revolutionary. Darkness is here universal, and light must struggle against it. Light fascinated him, and his notes record luminary experiments and analyses, including even a projector powered by a candle. Once he had defined the basic light areas, Leonardo sharpened the details, always as a movement of dark against light. With a few touches he could make a beautiful young head or a ravaged old one spring into being, full of life and emotion. At times ghostly in its softness, at times volcanic in its power, the dark wash of the *Adoration* seems to pour over figures, horses, and vegetation. The tree in the upper left corner shows the method clearly: a few horizontal strokes of the brush represent the foliage; later he would have united these masses with a trunk and branches.

That this unfinished painting has survived in this condition for so many centuries suggests a respect for Leonardo and his remarkable inventiveness that must date back to the 1480s. Such a large, prepared panel could easily have been used by another artist, even Filippino Lippi, who replaced Leonardo to produce the Adoration altarpiece needed by the monks of San Donato a Scopeto. To preserve Leonardo's delicate washes the panel was later varnished.

**LEONARDO IN MILAN.** Leonardo left Florence in 1481 or 1482 for a stay of nearly twenty years in Milan. In his letter of application to Duke Ludovico Sforza, Leonardo spoke eloquently about his abilities as a civil and military engineer, emphasizing how his inventions could further the duke's conquests and render life more agreeable in his capital. He also suggested a sculptural project for an equestrian monument to the duke's late father. Only at the end did he mention his skills as a painter. Soon after he arrived, however, he demonstrated his artistic mastery in the *Madonna of the Rocks*. Two versions survive: an earlier one, begun in 1483 and now in the Louvre (fig. 16.18) and a later one in the National Gallery in London (not illustrated). One or both were painted for the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, which had a chapel in San Francesco Grande in Milan. According to a document of 1483, the painting was part of a complex by Leonardo, two of his pupils, and an independent sculptor. The history of the London version can be traced continuously from the original altar until its sale to an English collector in 1785. Could it have been substituted at some time and for some unknown reason for the Paris version? There is no general agreement, but the majority of scholars concede that the Louvre panel is earlier and entirely by Leonardo, whereas the London panel, even if designed by the master, has areas painted by pupils that are consistent with the date of 1506, when there was a controversy between the artists and the confraternity.

The doctrine that Mary was free from all stain of original sin, central to the confraternity of the Immaculate Conception and promulgated in papal bulls written by Pope Sixtus IV close to the date when Leonardo painted the picture, was represented in a sculpted image at the same altar (above or below the painting) and infiltrated the meaning of Leonardo's painting. The artist shows the Virgin kneeling, her arm around the Baptist and her left hand extended protectively over the seated Christ Child, who is worshipped by John. An angel steadies the Christ Child and looks outward toward (but not directly at) the spectator, while pointing at John. The composition creates the unified pyramid that became the basis of High Renaissance compositional practice. The most extraordinary aspect of the painting is its background, a wilderness of jagged rocks rising almost to the apex of the arch. We look through the rocks into mysterious vistas flanked by pinnacles that rise from dim watercourses until we lose sight of them in the misty distance. According to tradition, the cave of the Nativity was mystically identified with the cave of the Sepulcher, and St. Antoninus claimed that both are foretold in the Song of Songs: "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places [*caverna*] of the stairs, let me see thy countenance" (2:14). Antoninus's

dove may be interpreted as a reference to the Virgin Mary, and perhaps the shadowy caves were intended to suggest humanity's dark mortality, which needs the divine light that enters through Mary as the immaculate vessel of God's purpose. Leonardo chose muted colors, uniting them within his geometric composition by the shadows that envelop each form.

Leonardo's silverpoint study for the head of the angel (fig. 16.19), made on rose-colored paper and heightened with white, shows the delicate modeling possible in this difficult technique. Leonardo may well have used the method recommended in his notebooks—setting the model in a black courtyard beneath a linen sheet—and he reproduced the effect of this illumination with strokes of silverpoint that are so sensitive and close to each other they almost blend into an all-over tone. The light that gives "a grace to faces," as Leonardo put it, strikes the luminous eyes, while the hair is suggested by a few simple lines.

Leonardo's projects for the duke of Milan ranged from military and civil engineering to costumed pageants enlivened by mechanical devices, but we know little about the monument that was his major artistic undertaking for the duke. Judging from a fiery preparatory drawing (fig. 16.20), Francesco Sforza was to have been reining in a rearing horse while an enemy cowered below. Military leaders on rearing steeds appear often in ancient relief sculptures, many of them accessible to Leonardo. Piero della Francesca had used the motif in the *Battle of Heraclius and Chosroes* (see fig. 11.26), but it remained for Leonardo to translate the notion into a project for a colossal statue in the round.

We have no way of knowing why Leonardo ultimately renounced the dramatic idea in favor of a striding pose, in the tradition of Donatello and Verrocchio (see figs. 10.23, 13.16). Drawings show he developed both ideas simultaneously; it is possible that the duke objected to the unconventional idea, or perhaps Leonardo became discouraged by the technical problems of casting and raising such a precariously balanced group in bronze on a large scale.

For a while the duke considered hiring another artist for the project, but in 1490 Leonardo set to work. Based on exhaustive anatomical studies of horses, he produced a full-scale model approximately 24 feet high in clay or plaster as well as plans for casting it in bronze. Unhappily, the drawings are our only evidence for the monument. After Louis XII ascended the French throne in 1498, he laid claim, as a descendant of the expelled Visconti, to the duchy of Milan, and the duke found himself in a military crisis that made it impossible for Leonardo to obtain the necessary metal. The French invaders who chased out Ludovico Sforza in 1499 used Leonardo's colossal model for target practice. What was left soon fell to pieces.

16.19. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Study of the Head of the Angel*, for the *Madonna of the Rocks*. c. 1483. Silverpoint and white on prepared paper, 7¼ × 6¼" (18.4 × 15.9 cm). Royal Library, Turin.



16.20. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Horseman Trampling on Foe, Study for an Equestrian Monument to Francesco Sforza.* c. 1485. Silverpoint on greenish ground, 6 × 7¼" (15.2 × 18.4 cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Monument commissioned by Ludovico Sforza.

The ruined condition of Leonardo's *Last Supper* (figs. 16.21–16.26) is due to Leonardo's technical experimentation. An artist as sensitive as Leonardo to the slightest throb of light and fluctuation in atmosphere was bound to be impatient with the fresco technique, which did not allow the time needed to establish either his unifying system of shadows or his perfect luminous finish to the details. After preparing the wall with a base layer covered with a thin layer of lead white, Leonardo built up his composition and colors using layers in a manner resembling tempera painting on panel. According to contemporary accounts, Leonardo would sometimes stand on the scaffolding all morning studying the relationships of tone without picking up a brush. Dampness between the layers prevented them from drying properly and the paint eventually began to flake off the wall. When completed, the painting inspired extravagant praise, but by 1517, while the artist was still alive, it had started to deteriorate; an engraving reproduced here gives some idea of the many details that are lost today (see fig. 16.26). When Vasari saw

the painting in 1566, he wrote that it was "in such a bad state that there is nothing more to be seen than a mass of confusion." It was repainted twice in the eighteenth century, suffered from the brutality of Napoleonic soldiers and of the monks, who cut a door through it, and was again repainted in the nineteenth century. In 1943 Allied bombs destroyed much of the refectory that housed the painting but Leonardo's repainted masterpiece survived, protected by sandbags supported on steel tubing. Extensive conservation efforts after World War II disclosed some of the original under the repainting, and a recent scientific restoration revealed Leonardo's delicacy of touch and luminosity of color in a few better-preserved areas.

The numerous reproductions of the *Last Supper* have numbed us to the power of Leonardo's innovative composition. Two preliminary drawings (figs. 16.21–16.22) show Leonardo experimenting with rather informal groupings of figures at a table. It is uncertain why one of these table scenes, very quickly sketched, shares the page with a geometrical drawing, rows of numbers, and sketches that seem to be based on architecture, but it demonstrates that the rules of mathematics and geometry were constantly in Leonardo's mind. In both drawings Leonardo placed Judas

*Opposite:* 16.18. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Madonna of the Rocks.* Begun 1483. Panel, transferred to canvas, 6'6½" × 4' (2 × 1.2 m). The Louvre, Paris. Commissioned by the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception for their chapel in S. Francesco Grande, Milan.
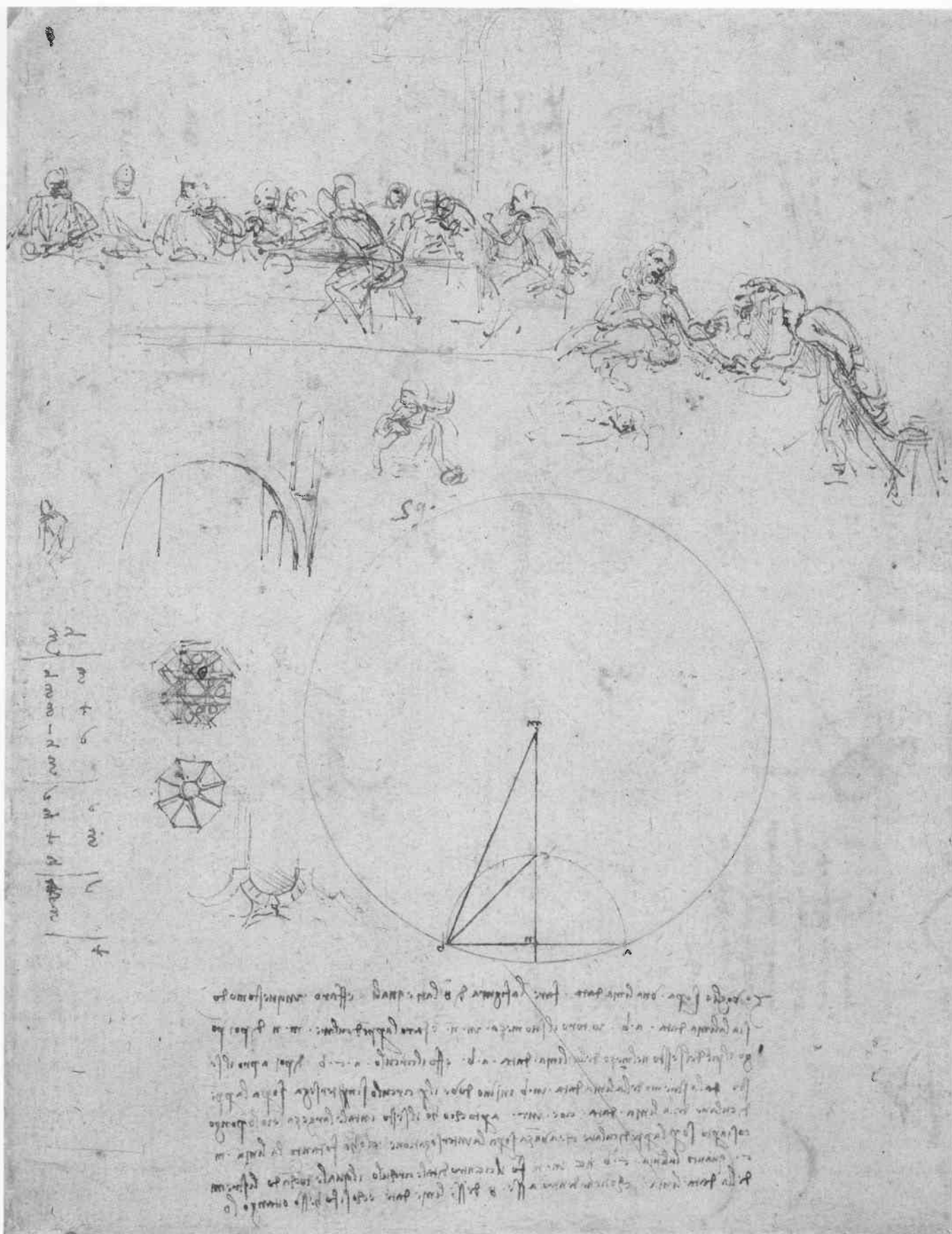
16.21. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Sketches for the Last Supper; Architectural and Geometric Sketches*. c. 1493–95. Pen and golden brown ink, 10½ × 8⁷⁄₁₆" (26.6 × 21.4 cm). The Royal Collection © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

on our side of the table, as had Gaddi, Castagno, and Ghirlandaio (see figs. 3.31, 11.1, 13.35), but he later chose instead to challenge the viewer to find Judas amid the loyal disciples behind the table. The Gospel of St. John (13:26) states that Christ identified the betrayer by handing him a piece of bread dipped in wine, while in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Christ indicated, "He who dippeth with me in the dish," and in Luke, "He whose hand is with me on the table." Leonardo used the text from Luke, for Judas' open hand is on the table, stretching after the bread. In the small group of figures to the right in the drawing that includes the circle, Leonardo experimented with Christ's gesture, drawing it in two positions, while Judas rises eagerly in response. In the final painting Christ's hands gesture toward the bread and the wine, suggesting a reference to the institution of the Eucharist (fig 16.23).

Leonardo fused this episode with yet a third narrative moment recounted by Matthew, Mark, and Luke: "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" Instead of emphasizing the betrayer, Leonardo showed how the announcement sparked astonishment on the part of the apostles and the searching of their own souls. Donatello represented varied human responses to a dramatic event in his *Feast of Herod* (see fig. 7.18), but Leonardo went further, composing the apostles' varied reactions in accordance with his view that mathematical unity underlies all experience. As if by inexorable law, Christ's revelation factors the twelve apostles into four groups of three each, set around the axial figure of Christ to establish a symmetrical order that controls the composition.

Leonardo was certainly aware of the traditional symbolic meaning of these numbers. Three, the number of the Trinity, is the most sacred, while four conveys the essence of matter in the elements of earth, air, fire, and water. More complex numerical symbolism has also been seen here, for there are three Theological Virtues and four is the number of the Gospels, the Cardinal Virtues, the Rivers of Paradise, the seasons of the year, and the times of day. Three plus four makes seven, the number of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Joys of the Virgin, and the Sorrows of the Virgin. Three times four makes twelve, the number not only of the apostles in the picture, but also of the gates of the New Jerusalem, the months of the year, and the hours of the day and night. Christ, the divider, appears at the center of both light and space, at the vanishing point of the perspective. Windows are symbols of revelation, and Christ, placed before the central of three windows, is the Second Person of the Trinity.

How much of this symbolism offered by later interpreters may have been conscious or unconscious in Leonardo's creation of the painting is uncertain, but there is no question that he created mathematical order out of the drama of this moment and that he emphasized the impact of the revelation of betrayal on the inner lives of the apostles by representing their reactions within an underlying numerical system. The two preliminary drawings reveal how Leonardo moved from an approach that emphasized variety to one that imposed mathematical order. In both of the preliminary drawings he showed John the Evangelist isolated, his head down on the table, as in Castagno's version of this subject (see fig. 11.12), but in the painting he united the figure with the other apostles.

16.23. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Last Supper*. 1495–97/98.
Tempera and oil on prepared wall, 13'9" × 29'10" (4.2 × 9.1 m).
Refectory of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, Milan. Commissioned by
Ludovico Sforza.
The lunettes above the painting have the coats of arms of Ludovico
Sforza and his family surrounded by wreaths of fruit and leaves so
subtly rendered that they were probably painted by Leonardo himself.

In other preliminary sketches, Leonardo labeled each apostle, and in one of his manuscripts he described their respective attitudes and emotions. He later studied each from live models, some of whose names are known. Many drawings are preserved, including a study of a youth in red chalk that was used for the head of St. James Major in the painting (see fig. 16.9). In the drawing the figure recoils as from a blow, his eyes staring, his mouth open; in the painting, he sinks back between St. Thomas, with his pointing, probing finger, and St. Philip, whose love for Christ seems evident in his expression, as the hands pressed to his chest protest that he is not the betrayer. Judas is the only apostle who need not protest; he knows. He is the only apostle who reaches for food, implying that he will receive the sacrament unworthily. He is also the only one to recoil from Christ and the only one whose face is not in the light. His dark bulk is contrasted in the same group with the lighted profile of St. Peter and the face of St. John, whom, in defiance of tradition, Leonardo placed at Christ's right. Christ turns from Judas, and the resigned expression on his face suggests his words in the Gospels, "And the Son of man indeed goeth … but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed" (Luke 22:21, 22). When Judas jerks away from Christ, he knocks over the salt cellar, an act that popular superstition suggests will bring about bad luck; since Christ uses salt as a metaphor for the apostles ("You are the salt of the earth," Matthew 5:13), this spilling of the salt has also been interpreted by Jack Wasserman as a reference to the fact that Judas' betrayal has shattered the fellowship of Christ's beloved followers.

We can catch an echo of the surface quality of the original painting in the pewter plates, the freshly unfolded
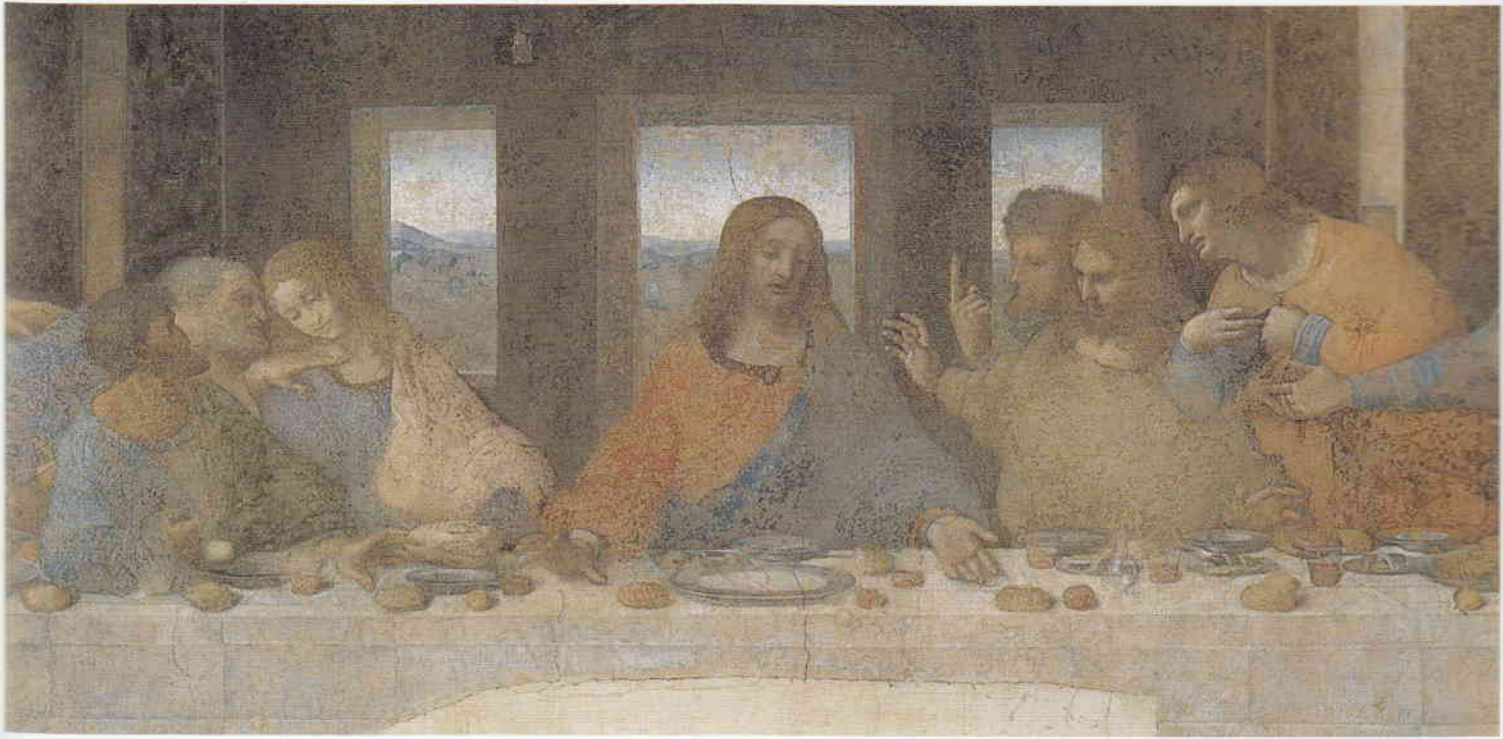
16.24. Detail of fig. 16.23.

tablecloth with its woven pattern, the wineglasses, and the rolls set upon the table. Careful study of the meal offered to the apostles reveals, surprisingly, not the Paschal lamb that would be expected at Passover, but whole fish and sliced grilled eel served with orange slices. Perhaps these were chosen as vehicles for Leonardo to demonstrate his skill. In the painting of the figures, every silken curl, every passage of flesh must once have been virtually perfect. Leonardo's forms have lost their definition but not their impact, his space its precision but not its depth. Even in its ruined state, the psychological effect of the painting is overwhelming (fig 16.24).

Leonardo took in the *Last Supper* a step as definitive as that of Donatello nearly eighty years earlier in the *St. George and the Dragon* relief (see fig. 7.14), but in a different direction: he broke with the Quattrocento tradition that culminated in the illusionistic systems of Mantegna and Melozzo, in which represented space is an extension of the room in which the spectator stands. Although Leonardo's perspective is consistent, the vanishing point is so high that there is no place in the refectory where spectators can stand with their eyes on the same level (fig 16.25).



16.25. Refectory of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, Milan, with a view of Leonardo's *Last Supper.*

16.26. GIOVANNI PIETRO DA BIRAGO (attributed to). *Last Supper, after Leonardo da Vinci.* c. 1500. Engraving, 9¹/₁₆ × 17³/₄" (23 × 45 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The dog shown in the lower right is not found in Leonardo's composition.

Thus the walls of the upper chamber in Jerusalem cannot be read as continuations of the real walls of the refectory, and the Albertian role of the picture as a vertical intersection through the visual pyramid (see fig. 6.6) has been abandoned. Within this perspective demonstration, larger-than-life human beings act on a grander plane, above our experience. Ideal masses inhabit an ideal space to expound an idea, replacing the delight of the Quattrocento in visual reality and vivid anecdote. We are now truly in the High Renaissance, which is Leonardo's single-handed creation; it will be adopted later by Michelangelo, Fra Bartolommeo, Raphael, and Andrea del Sarto.

Leonardo's *Last Supper* became known not through visits to the monks' refectory, but through widely distributed prints that preserved its design and details but little of the subtlety of the original. The example reproduced here (fig. 16.26), attributed to Giovanni Pietro da Birago (d. 1513), is the earliest reproductive print made after a Renaissance painting. The fact that it was produced almost immediately after the painting was finished suggests the importance assigned to Leonardo's *Last Supper* at that time. Several other early engravings of Leonardo's painting were actually copies of this print and not of the painting itself. The engraving gives no hint of the delicacy of Leonardo's shadows or of his ability to represent the surface and texture of living and inanimate things. The fact

that the print preserves the feet of the figures, however, helps us to re-create the now-lost foundation that Leonardo originally provided for his composition, while its sharp detail brings the rather misty masterpiece that we view today into sharper focus.

We must be careful not to expect complete accuracy in such reproductive works, however, for the engraver also added details to Leonardo's composition, including the houses seen through the left window and the dog at the far right. The inscription added to the print says "...one of you shall betray me" (Matthew 26:21). Another copy of the painting, executed in the expensive medium of tapestry, was commissioned by King Francis I of France as a gift to Pope Clement VII; now in the Vatican Museums, it replaces Leonardo's simple background with elaborate architectural and landscape details.

**LEONARDO 1499–1519.** It is noteworthy that the new, grand vision of an ideal world in Leonardo's painting was expressed at the moment when the political situation in Italy was recognized as hopeless. After the French invasion and the Battle of the Taro in 1495, it was clear that no matter who claimed victory in that disastrous encounter, Italy was divided. The peninsula would remain largely impotent in the face of the monarchies of Western Europe until the nineteenth century. Despite the appeals of

Machiavelli and others, it was only a matter of time before the Italian states—with the exception of the Genoese and Venetian republics—were overwhelmed by the forces of foreign tyranny. Florence and the papacy, however, maintained a shadowy independence. High Renaissance art in Florence and Rome can be understood as representing a kind of human grandeur and power that Italians seemed to have known was doomed in real life. It is a valiant effort, and there is often something dreamlike about its noble and ideal productions as compared with the pedestrian solidity of earlier Quattrocento images.

Except for a second stay in Milan from 1508 to 1513, Leonardo traveled frequently between 1499 and 1517. Records show that he returned to Florence and Rome repeatedly, stayed in Venice and Parma, and traveled with the army of Cesare Borgia. Many of the artist's engineering and cartographic experiments date from this period.

In 1501 Fra Pietro da Novellara, acting as an agent for Isabella d'Este, wrote to the marchioness from Florence about a cartoon that Leonardo had made: "depicting a Christ Child about one year old who, almost slipping from his mother's arms, grasps a lamb and seems to hug it. The mother, half rising from the lap of St. Anne, takes the Child as though to separate him from the lamb, which signifies the Passion. St. Anne, also appearing to rise from a sitting position, seems to wish to keep her daughter from separating the Child and the lamb, and perhaps is intended to represent the Church, which does not wish the Passion of Christ to be impeded. And these figures are life-sized, but they are in a small cartoon, because they are all either seated, or bending over, and one is placed in front of another, moving toward the left, and this study is not yet finished." It is not certain that Leonardo would have intended all the symbolism that Fra Pietro finds in his work, but no matter how foreign it is to the way many of us would approach Leonardo's painting today, Fra Pietro's emphasis on complex symbolism is an important document that reveals how a painting could be received by a contemporary viewer.

Leonardo's cartoon, exhibited at the monastery of Santissima Annunziata in Florence, was a proposal for an altarpiece for the church. The cartoon is lost, but its composition is known from a surviving sketch. It excited admiration and influenced Florentine artists, especially Fra Bartolommeo, the young Michelangelo, and the still younger Raphael. They must have been impressed by those very qualities that Fra Pietro emphasized: the overlapping that enabled the artist to fit three life-sized figures into a small cartoon. But the general public also thronged to see it, probably because in April 1501 they were praying for the intervention of St. Anne, traditionally a protector of the Florentine Republic, against the threat of Cesare Borgia's armies.

Leonardo experimented with a similar composition of intertwined figures in another cartoon, this one surviving, the *Virgin and Child with Sts. Anne and John the Baptist* (fig. 16.27). Mary, seated on her mother's lap, holds the Child, who blesses his cousin John. Anne's and Mary's knees and legs—two lowered, two raised—provides a foundation for the glances above: Anne looking at Mary, Mary at Christ, and Christ at John, who gazes back in response. While the composition unifies the figures, it is these expressions that hold the viewer's attention: it is hard to imagine more tender and loving glances than those that



16.27. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Virgin and Child with Sts. Anne and John the Baptist* (the "Burlington House Cartoon"). c. 1505–7. Black chalk and touches of white chalk on brownish paper, mounted on canvas on tinted paper, 4'7¾" × 3'5¼", 141.5 × 104.6 cm). National Gallery, London.
Famous or controversial works of art sometimes become the victims of attacks. In 1986 a man smuggled a gun into the National Gallery and shot this cartoon through its protective cover but he fortunately missed the faces and other essential areas of the work.

pass from grandmother to mother to child. Leonardo blurred the forms somewhat, leaving them without the exact definition that would make these expressions fixed and less suggestive. The inclusion of John the Baptist suggests that Leonardo prepared the cartoon for a Florentine patron. The powerful sculptural quality of the monochrome figures suggests the influence of Michelangelo. The delicacy of Leonardo's technique is evident in the faces, where he has imperceptibly blended charcoal and black and white chalk to create the effect of light caressing flesh and merging into deep shadow. The subtlety of the three-dimensional forms is in sharp contrast to the hair, which is only quickly sketched in.

Another variation on this compositional and expressive theme is the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* (fig. 16.28), one of three paintings—the others are the *Mona Lisa* (see fig. 16.29) and a bust-length figure of *St. John the Baptist* (not illustrated)—that Leonardo took to France and kept with him until his death; all three are today in the Louvre Museum in Paris. If the *Last Supper* is the first High Renaissance wall painting, then the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* is the first example of the new principles of unity, scale, and compression in panel painting. Here the tendency toward a living, moving pyramid that began with Pollaiuolo's *St. Sebastian* (see fig. 13.7) reaches its climax. The pyramidal composition is an essential of classical art; although Leonardo could not have known it, the same principle is exemplified in the pedimental sculptures of the Parthenon. For Leonardo the activating principle of his classical composition was motion, which in his writings appears to be at the heart of his universe.

The relatively unmodeled appearance of the Virgin's face is due to overcleaning; the highlights and soft shadows have been rubbed off, and here and there the underdrawing shows through the surface of the cheeks and neck. The Virgin's blue mantle has also apparently lost some of its color. But much of Leonardo's surface is nearly intact, and in the other drapery and the face of St. Anne, as well as in the foreground, with its rocky layers and rounded pebbles, we see Leonardo's use of *sfumato* to unite the painting. *Sfumato* ("smokelike") describes the subtle transitions of Leonardo's modeling as he blurred the edges of forms and modulated from highlight into deep shadow. Throughout the painting, the enameled brilliance of late Quattrocento coloring has been replaced by a new, subdued tonality. The figural pyramid divides the mountain landscape. This is not a poetic portrait of a natural landscape like those of Giovanni Bellini (see figs. 15.39–15.40), which evoke the mood of a time and place, any more than Leonardo's perspective can be related to a specific moment of vision: it is a composite of observa-

tions and memories collected in Leonardo's Alpine wanderings. The fantastic peaks recall the Dolomites above Belluno so accurately that they make the rocky pinnacles of Leonardo's earlier backgrounds seem mere inventions. Escarpments, crags, lakes, rivers, and cascades recede and blend into the distance.

The identity of the sitter in Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* (fig. 16.29) is still debated. According to Vasari, she was Lisa di Antonio Maria Gherardini, the wife of the prominent Florentine Francesco del Giocondo ("Mona" is a term of respect, a shortened version of the Italian phrase equivalent to "my lady"). An earlier source did not mention this identification, reporting only that the painting had been made for Giuliano de' Medici. Vasari also wrote that Leonardo worked on the painting for three full years.

In the *Mona Lisa* Leonardo treated the single figure much as he had the compact group in the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne*. Earlier full-face or three-quarter portraits such as Botticelli's *Portrait of a Man* (see fig. 13.26) and Perugino's *Francesco delle Opere* (see fig. 14.20) concentrated on the head and shoulders, cutting the body at mid-chest and raising the hands so they are visible within the frame. Even Leonardo's own *Ginevra de' Benci* (see fig. 16.14) conformed to this principle before it was truncated. In the *Mona Lisa*, Leonardo continued the figure well below the waist, and both arms are complete. The hands, utterly relaxed, complete in their unity the spiral turn of the torso and head.

It can be argued that, by including so much of the figure, Leonardo was implying a full-length portrait and suggesting that the whole person is represented here. This new format invented by Leonardo became popular in Italian and Northern European portraiture and continued through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. The subject looks larger and grander than in Quattrocento portraits, in keeping with the new dignity and monumentality of the High Renaissance. The composition, like so many other High Renaissance works, is based on the pyramid. The effect of stability would have been greater before the panel was cut down on both sides, eliminating colonnettes that framed the figure (the base of the colonnettes is still visible on the balustrade to either side).

The calm hint of a smile, about which so much has been written, and the composure of the hands were characteristic for a generation whose standards are summed up in the untranslatable word *sprezzatura*. This term was coined by Baldassare Castiglione (see fig. 17.55) in his *Book of the Courtier*, a guidebook to aristocratic behavior written between 1508 and 1528. The Mona Lisa's calm assurance and the ease with which she seems to confront the viewer express Castiglione's requirement that one's behavior in public should seem effortless and natural, even in difficult

16.28. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Madonna and Child with St. Anne.* c. 1508–13(?). Panel, 5'6¹/₄" × 4'3¹/₄"
(1.7 × 1.3 m). The Louvre, Paris.
Faint drawings of a horse's head, part of a skull, and Jesus playing with a lamb were recently discovered on the
back of the wooden panel; whether they are by Leonardo remains to be determined.

16.29. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Mona Lisa*. 1503. Panel, $30\frac{1}{4} \times 21$" (77 × 53 cm). The Louvre, Paris. Vasari's description suggests qualities no longer evident in the darkened original: "The nose, with its beautiful nostrils, rosy and tender, seemed to be alive. The opening of the mouth, united by the red of the lips to the flesh tones of the face, seemed not to be colored but to be living flesh." Vasari had almost certainly not seen the painting, so his comments must have been based on what others had told him about it.

social situations. But Castiglione's book was directed toward behavior at court, and it is remarkable that here we see *sprezzatura* expressed by a woman. Renaissance books of etiquette had previously stressed that a woman should never look directly into a man's eyes, and one aspect of the painting's fame is surely the manner in which this woman challenges traditional cultural assumptions about appro-priate female behavior by suggesting that her ability to confront us is effortless and even pleasing to her. The fact that she wears none of the jewelry that we find in most earlier and contemporary female portraits (see figs. 13.9, 16.50) and that there is no indication of the status of her family supports the suggestion that Leonardo's intent was to emphasize the sitter as an individual, not as a

showcase for her husband's or her family's wealth and social standing.

The *Mona Lisa* has evoked a flood of scholarship and popular literature. Whether or not Freud was correct in his interpretation of Leonardo's character, abundant evidence suggests that his feelings toward women were ambivalent and it seems unlikely that the sitter exercised a romantic attraction over the artist. One of the more fantastic twentieth-century interpretations suggested that the painting is actually a self-portrait of Leonardo dressed as a woman, but no firm evidence supported this assertion beyond the notion that every artistic creation is in some way an expression of the personality of the artist.

We should not attempt to dissociate the person from the surrounding landscape; motif after motif is continuous in figure and background. The locks of hair falling over her right shoulder blend with rocky outcroppings through which a road winds; the folds of the scarf over the left shoulder are continued in the line of a distant bridge. The nature that she dominates is the same world of roads, rocks, mists, and seas that Leonardo began using for backgrounds beginning with his contribution to Verrocchio's *Baptism of Christ* (see figs. 13.12, 16.11); devoid of humans or animals, habitations, farms, fields, or even trees, it is capped by Dolomitic crags like those in the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne.* The only human constructions, the roads and the bridge, lead to indistinguishable waters and unscalable rocks. Most subtle of all is the placing of the highest level of mist so that it accentuates the expression of the eyes, while a sense of unease is caused by the fact that the two sides of the landscape seem to have different horizons. The painting is obscured with layers of darkened, yellowish varnish, so that the color is unintentionally muted; because such glazes were almost certainly part of Leonardo's original technique, restorers have been reluctant to tackle this famous painting.

In 1503 Leonardo was commissioned by the Florentine Republic under Piero Soderini to paint the *Battle of Anghiari* for the Palazzo dei Priori. Leonardo's picture was intended to commemorate the 1440 victory of the Florentines over the forces of the Milanese duke Filippo Maria Visconti. In a period when the republic still had to face the forces of Cesare Borgia, it is understandable that the government would wish to make reference to this historic triumph over an old enemy on the walls of the Sala del Cinquecento (Hall of the Five Hundred), which had been added to the Palazzo dei Priori to accommodate the Council of Five Hundred that ruled the new republic. The original republican decorations also included the *Battle of Cascina* by Michelangelo (see fig. 16.42), commissioned a year later, on the same wall or the opposite side of the room.

Apparently, Leonardo painted only the central section of the battle scene; for the remainder, perhaps separated by windows from the center, we have only vivid sketches. The work was executed in another of Leonardo's experimental techniques, but the exact formula is uncertain. He abandoned the painting in 1506 when he returned to Milan, and what remained of it was apparently cleared away in 1557 by Vasari to make way for his murals glorifying the Medici rule of Grand Duke Cosimo I. Even during the brief period when the painting or sections of the cartoon survived, however, the potency of Leonardo's invention was so compelling that it fundamentally changed the whole idea of battle painting.

The effect of Leonardo's lost painting is preserved in a drawing by the seventeenth-century Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens (fig. 16.30). Although Rubens had seen only copies of the painting, which disappeared before he was born, he re-created something of the dynamism of the original through the power of his own imagination.

The central scene depicted the contest of four horsemen for the possession of the standard of the republic. Leonardo wrote in his notebooks that the superiority of painting over poetry was evident in the immediacy with which the painter could represent the smoke rising from the battlefield, the dust of the ground mingled with blood and turning into red mud under the hooves of the horses, the faces of the victors distorted by rage and exultation and those of the vanquished by pain and despair. To achieve this level of struggle, Leonardo converted the



16.30. PETER PAUL RUBENS. *Battle of Anghiari*, partial copy after LEONARDO DA VINCI. c. 1615. Pen and ink and chalk, 17¾ × 25¼" (45 × 64 cm). The Louvre, Paris. Leonardo's original (now lost) was commissioned by the Florentine Republic.
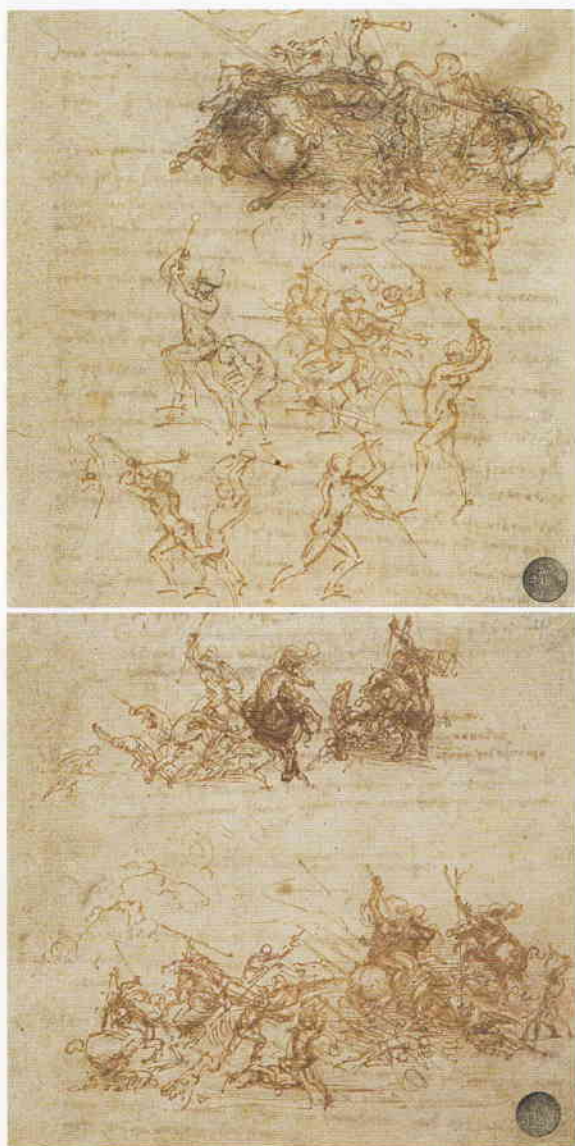
horses and riders, whose ancestors we have seen in his *Adoration of the Magi* and Sforza monument (see figs. 16.16, 16.20), into a tornado of intertwined figures. The unified High Renaissance figural composition here reaches an intensity so great that we are torn between the fascination of watching the beautiful interplay of rhythmic elements—the streaming manes and tails, for example—and the urge to turn in fear from the snarling ferocity of the horses, who almost outdo the riders in violence. Their hooves interlock and they fight with their teeth while the riders' swords clash in midair and the horses crush fallen warriors below. Additional encounters planned for the remaining spaces cover many sheets of Leonardo's sketchbooks (fig. 16.31).

To the consternation of his contemporaries, Leonardo painted little or not at all during the last ten years of his life. He returned to Milan in 1506, where he was occupied for a while in the design of an equestrian monument for Giangiacomo Trivulzio, marshal of the Italian armies of King Louis XII of France. He was appointed *peintre et ingénieur ordinaire* (painter and engineer) to the king, a position that apparently involved little work and gave the artist a handsome stipend. Except for a brief sojourn in Florence in 1508, he remained in Milan, largely occupied with his anatomical studies, until 1513, when he went to Rome at the invitation of Pope Leo X. The Roman phase of the High Renaissance had largely passed, with Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling and Raphael's first two Vatican *stanze* already complete. Leonardo was given a suite of rooms in the Vatican Belvedere. One of his noted accomplishments of this period was a pair of lizard-skin wings mounted on golden wires and attached to a tiny corset around the waist of a live lizard, which could thus march about like a little dragon, displaying its wings in the sunlight. The grandiosity of Michelangelo, then working in seclusion on the statues for the second version of the tomb of Julius II, can have held little appeal for Leonardo, and there is no record that Leo X entrusted him with any specific commission.

In 1517 Leonardo accepted the invitation of King Francis I of France to spend his remaining years at the château of Cloux, near Amboise, where his only duty was to talk to the king. According to accounts by contemporary witnesses, his conversation radiated his immense learning and imagination, but of his artistic activity little is known. Among the works attributed to these years are more drawings of water, as in figure 16.32; now the waters are unchained, descending destructively upon the earth. Leonardo claimed that water was more dreadful than fire, which dies when it has consumed that which feeds it, while a river in flood continues its destructive course until it rests at last in the sea:



16.31. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Two Sheets of Battle Studies*. c. 1503. Pen and ink, each approx. 6 × 6" (15.2 × 15.2 cm). Accademia, Venice.

16.32. LEONARDO DA VINCI. *Deluge.*
c. 1514–19. Black chalk, 6¼ × 8¼"
(16 × 21 cm). The Royal Collection
© 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

But in what terms am I to describe the abominable and awful evils against which no human resource avails? Which lay waste the high mountains with their swelling and exalted waves, cast down the strongest banks, tear up the deep-rooted trees, and with ravening waves laden with mud from crossing the ploughed fields carry with them the unendurable labors of the wretched tillers of the soil.

Here, the water engulfs barely visible human constructions and assumes spiral shapes expressive of Leonardo's reverence for nature's power.

Leonardo died in France in 1519, and although Vasari's story that he died in the arms of King Francis I is probably apocryphal, the king was Leonardo's good friend as well as his employer.

## Michelangelo to 1505

When Leonardo abandoned Florence for Milan in the early 1480s, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) was still a boy. His earliest years were spent outside the city in Settignano, near the stone quarries. By the time Leonardo returned to Florence in 1500, the young sculptor was a formidable competitor to him in the art of painting as well. Michelangelo dominated the sixteenth century to such a degree that it was virtually impossible for artists to escape his influence.

Michelangelo's character and stylistic approach place him in opposition to Leonardo. Where Leonardo was skeptical, Michelangelo believed. Where Leonardo was apolitical, Michelangelo was a loyal Florentine. Where Leonardo looked on the world and humanity with detachment, Michelangelo was obsessed by guilt. Where Leonardo was intellectually and physically charming but seems to have cared little for those he attracted, Michelangelo was spare, taciturn, and irascible, yet consumed with a deep love for others that only in his old age was requited by the adoring reverence of his pupils. Where Leonardo was absorbed in the mysteries of nature, of which the human being was only a single facet, Michelangelo scorned landscape, which appears in his art only occasionally as a fragment of rock or a tree blasted by lightning. Where Leonardo considered the eye the window through which the soul assesses the physical world, Michelangelo in his writings extolled the eye's spheroid beauty or shrank from the emotional effect of spiritual radiance from the eyes of those he loved. Throughout the seventy-five years of Michelangelo's artistic production, his main interest was in the life of the human soul as expressed in the structure and movements of the human body.

Michelangelo was born in a barren region of the Apennines, in the village of Caprese. His father, an impoverished but pretentious gentleman named Lodovico di Simone Buonarroti, was governor (*podestà*) of this Florentine outpost. Before Michelangelo was a month old, Lodovico's one-year term came to an end, and the family returned to Florence, but even in his old age the artist attached special importance to having been born in the rarefied air of this mountain town. He was given to a wet nurse who lived on a small family property at Settignano,

a village of stonecutters that had been the home of Deside-rio da Settignano and the Rossellino family. It is difficult to resist the temptation of drawing a connection between his statement that he drank in a love of stonecutters' tools with his wet nurse's milk and his fondness for representing the theme of the Virgin nursing the Christ Child.

In 1549, when Michelangelo was already old, he was subjected to a series of questions circulated by the human-ist Benedetto Varchi on the relative merits of painting and sculpture. We already know that Leonardo, who was long dead, would have argued the superiority of painting. Michelangelo's reply stated:

> The nearer painting approaches relief the better it is, and that relief is worse the nearer it approaches painting. Therefore it has always seemed to me that sculpture was a lantern to painting and that the difference between them is that between the sun and the moon.

By sculpture Michelangelo went on to explain that he meant works that are produced "by force of taking away [that is, by carving]; sculpture that is done by adding on [that is, by building a figure in clay] resembles paint-ing." Michelangelo concluded that "Sculpture and paint-ing [should] make peace ... and leave such disputes behind, for more time goes into them than into the making of figures." At the age of seventy-three, Michelangelo was more interested in making art than in engaging in philosophical debate.

Michelangelo's desire to become an artist was opposed by his family, especially his father and uncle. As descen-dants of the counts of Canossa, these brothers fancied themselves and their families to be above mechanical labor. Eventually, they yielded and placed the boy in Ghirlandaio's studio in 1488, at the age of thirteen. He must have been skillful already, for he drew a salary instead of having his father pay for an apprenticeship. He could have found no better teacher from whom to absorb the traditions and techniques of the Quattrocento. In many areas of the Sistine Ceiling one still feels the solidity of Ghirlandaio's form and spatial structure, and in the 1530s, when he was occupied with the *Last Judgment* (see fig. 20.1), Michelangelo expressed his disinterest in painting in oil, preferring the traditional Tuscan fresco technique that he had learned in Ghirlandaio's workshop. In none of his paintings does he employ the soft shadows used by Leonardo, insisting always on the clarity of form charac-teristic of the Florentine tradition.

Michelangelo may well have taken part in the execution of Ghirlandaio's fresco cycle in the chancel of Santa Maria Novella (see figs. 13.38–13.39), although Ghirlandaio's control over the workshop and his style in the cycle is so



16.33. MICHELANGELO. *Madonna of the Stairs*. 1489–92. Marble, 21¾ × 15¾" (55.3 × 40 cm). Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

consistent that it is impossible to identify figures or pas-sages by his thirteen-year-old assistant. After barely a year with Ghirlandaio, Michelangelo was invited into the house of Lorenzo the Magnificent, where he stayed and worked in a kind of art school held in the now-vanished Medici gardens, opposite the church of San Marco. At Palazzo Medici he would have been able to study works of ancient art including marble sculpture, cameos, and coins as well as Renaissance paintings and sculpture. He was under the tutelage of Bertoldo di Giovanni, a sculptor who had been Donatello's assistant. In expeditions to Santa Croce and the Carmine, he made drawings after the frescoes of Giotto and Masaccio. It was in the Brancacci Chapel that Michelangelo's criticism of a drawing by the sculptor Pietro Torrigiani earned him the blow that broke his nose, disfiguring him for life.

At Lorenzo's table, whoever arrived first sat closest to Il Magnifico; Michelangelo must sometimes have found himself sitting next to him or near one of his three sons:

Piero the Unlucky, who became Lorenzo's successor; Giuliano, who later became the ruler of Florence; and Giovanni, later Pope Leo X. Other guests might have included the Neo-Platonic philosophers who were part of Lorenzo's circle. There must have been a heady atmosphere of political power and intellectual performance, especially for Michelangelo, who seems to have learned only a few phrases of Latin.

**EARLY WORKS.** The artist's earliest extant work, a small marble relief known as the *Madonna of the Stairs* (fig. 16.33), probably dates from these years; it was influenced by both the *rilievo schiacciato* of Donatello (see fig. 7.14) and, probably, one or more of the ancient reliefs, cameos, and coins then in the Medici collections. For the only time in the work of Michelangelo, we are not exactly sure what forms exist under the shimmering drapery that covers the Virgin's limbs (it was later said that his figures were nude even when clothed). But the back and right arm of the Christ Child are extraordinary, surpassing Early Renaissance sculptures in their muscular power. Michelangelo reused this same back many years later in the figure of *Day* in the Medici Chapel (see fig. 18.5). As in earlier works, the Madonna seems to be meditating on Christ's Passion, while the stairs may refer to Mary's symbolic role as a stairway to heaven. The angels in the background are wingless, as is almost always the case in Michelangelo's work. These figures are unfinished, their heads scarcely more than blocks. Already in the sculptor's adolescence, we sense a hint of the artistic paralysis that sometimes prevented him from finishing his works.

Also from the Medici period is the *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs* (fig. 16.34), its powerful movement in sharp contrast with the quiet introspection of the *Madonna of the Stairs*. The two opposing strains demonstrated in these early works coexisted in Michelangelo's nature, and the
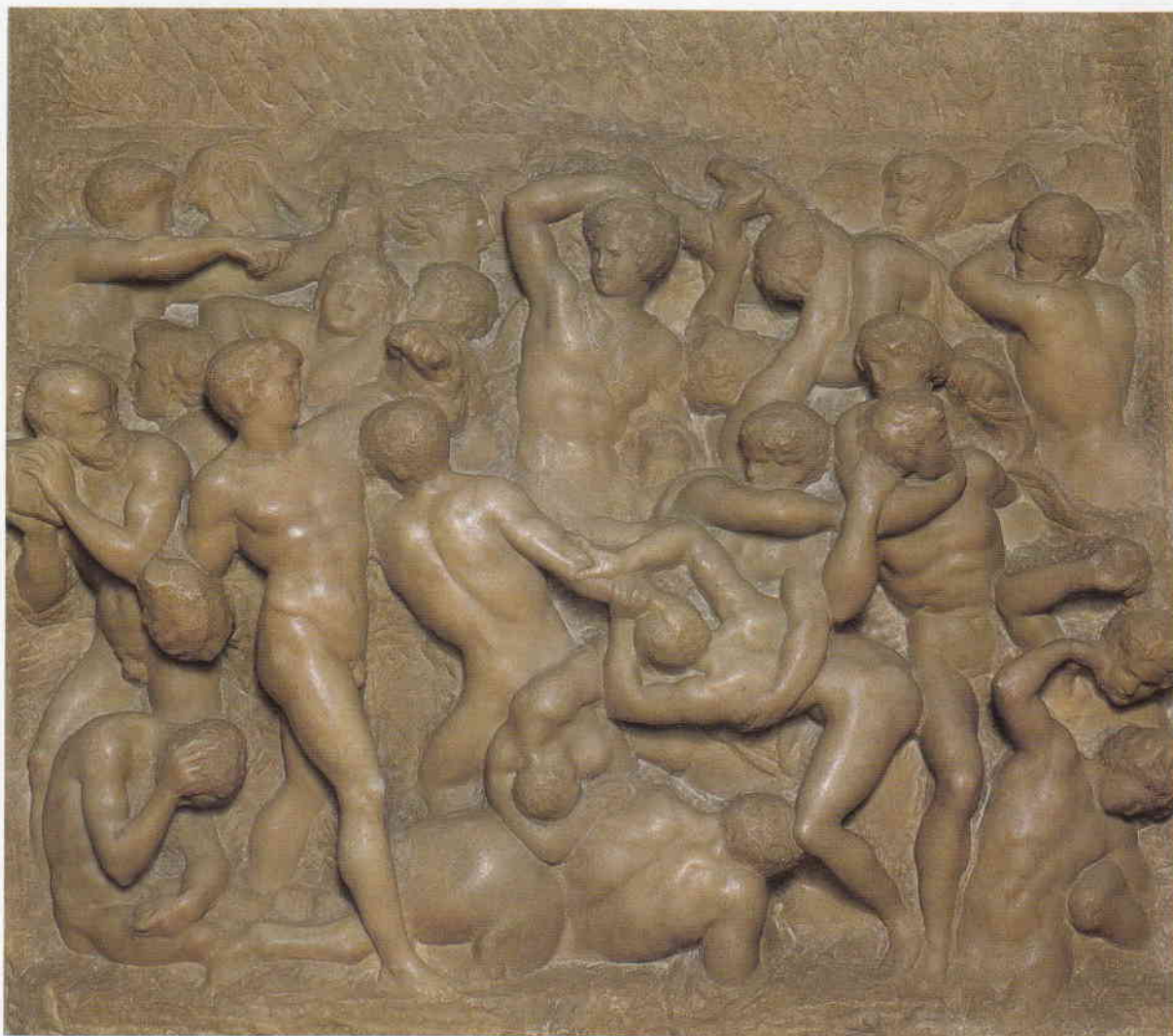


16.34. MICHELANGELO. *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs*. c. 1492. Marble, 33¼ × 35⅛" (84.5 × 89.2 cm). Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

dichotomy between them may be witnessed again and again, sometimes within the same work. This composition of high-relief intertwined figures was inspired by Michelangelo's study of ancient Roman battle sarcopaghi. The viciousness and mayhem found in Ovid's ancient account of the fight between the Lapiths and the centaurs, who became drunk and attempted to carry off the Lapith women at a wedding feast, is not emphasized here. No blow connects with its intended victim, no stone strikes a human head, no club disfigures a human body. Occasionally, in this vibrant interlace of struggling figures, two actually wrestle, but this is as far as the artist went in depicting brutality.

With his characteristic abhorrence of the monstrous—indeed of any violence done to the human body—Michelangelo has so subordinated the lower bodies of the centaurs that they are difficult to make out. The nudes are unfinished, and some heads are so rough they can hardly be distinguished from the rocks wielded by the centaurs. The *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs* is among the most advanced figural compositions of its time, but its figural interlace does not, as in Pollaiuolo and Leonardo, construct a unifying geometric shape. If the *Madonna of the Stairs* is the predecessor of the sibyls of the Sistine Chapel (see fig. 17.36) and the *Medici Madonna* (see fig. 18.7), the figures in the *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs* are progenitors of the herculean nudes of the *Battle of Cascina* (see fig. 16.42) and the *Last Judgment* (see fig. 20.1).

With the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492, however, this episode in Michelangelo's life was over, and the boy found himself back in the modest house of his father in the street that follows the curves of the old Roman arena near Santa Croce. Some sources claim that Piero the Unlucky called Michelangelo back to the Palazzo Medici for a few months but the only work he produced there was a figure sculpted from snow for the palace courtyard; no drawing or other evidence for this figure survives.

Many scholars accept a wooden *Crucifix* (fig. 16.35) as the documented one that Michelangelo made for Santo Spirito in 1492. In contrast to the vigor of the figures in the battle relief, the body of the crucified Christ has an unexpected elegance of proportions and a graceful pose. The figure's nudity is in keeping with the artist's reverence for the human body, and he repeatedly depicted Christ as gloriously nude as any mythological Greek hero. (When the sculpture was used for public devotion, a fabric loincloth was added that would have heightened the naturalistic effect of the polychromed figure.) This is the only work in wood we know by Michelangelo, and the sculptor is reported to have carved it in gratitude for the prior's permission to dissect corpses in the hospital of Santo Spirito. Unlike Leonardo's anatomical studies, which emphasized
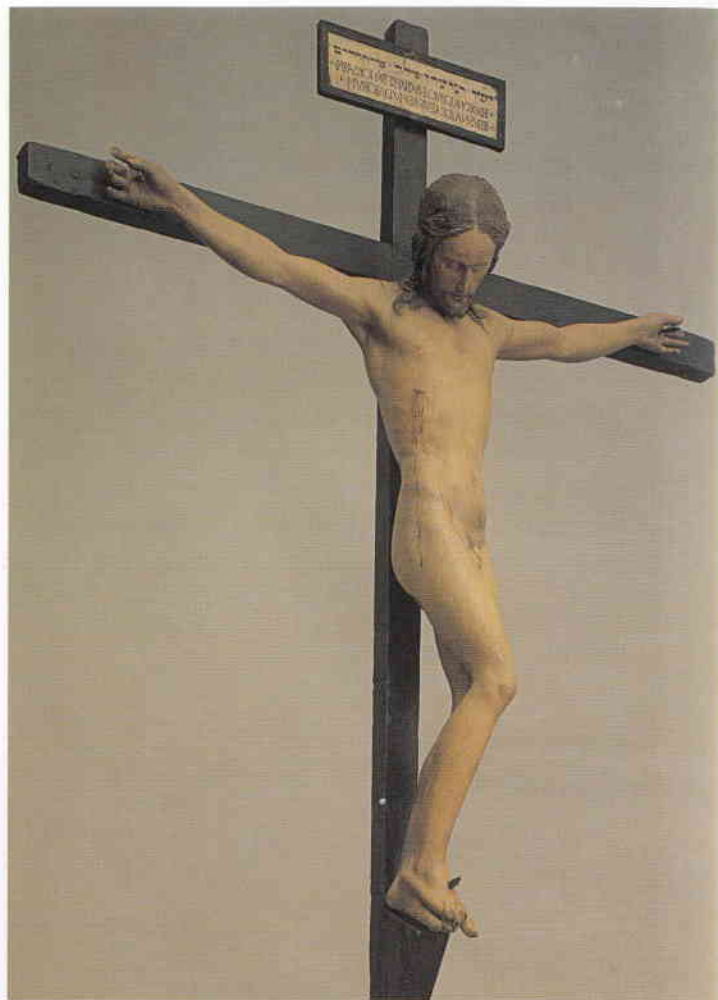


16.35. MICHELANGELO. *Crucifix*. 1492. Painted wood, height 4'5" (1.35 m). Sto. Spirito, Florence.

the body's physiology, Michelangelo's investigations were geared toward understanding gestures and movements and how they could express spiritual life. Like Leonardo, he dissected corpses well into his advanced years and hoped to author a treatise on anatomy for artists.

Michelangelo's brief visit to Venice in 1494 seems to have had little effect on either guest or host city, but during his stay in Bologna during the winter of 1494–95 he executed three statuettes to complete the tomb of St. Dominic. He also came into contact with the works of Jacopo della Quercia (see figs. 7.23–7.24), with their emphasis on the power and dignity of the human body, whether heroically nude or enveloped by surging waves of drapery. Jacopo's influence on Michelangelo's style played an important role in the formation of some of the images on the Sistine Ceiling. Also, although its connection with specific works has never been successfully demonstrated, Savonarola's preaching may well have affected the young artist (see p. 342). In his old age Michelangelo still read Savonarola's works and remembered the sound of his voice.

Although the Rome of 1496, dominated by the corrupt Borgia pope Alexander VI, may have afforded little spiritual inspiration for the twenty-one-year-old artist, it did provide contact with more examples of ancient Roman architecture, sculpture, and painting than were available in Florence. Their influence upon Michelangelo's art is incalculable. In the *Bacchus* (fig. 16.36), made for a rich Roman, Michelangelo explored human flesh in a manner unprecedented since antiquity. The sensuality of ancient models such as the *Apollo Belvedere* (see fig 1.5) fascinated



16.36. MICHELANGELO. *Bacchus*. 1496–97. Marble, height 6'7½" (2 m). Bargello, Florence. Probably commissioned by Cardinal Raffaele Riario, but in the early 1530s the work was visible in the garden of Jacopo Galli. Michelangelo was paid 160 florins for his work.

the young Florentine, but he infused the Bacchus with a new realism. Nude and wreathed with vine leaves and bunches of grapes, the god of wine is shown deeply affected by alcohol: his eyes seem glazed and he lurches unsteadily. His muscles are no longer firm and his abdomen sags. The grapes that fall from his panther skin are coveted by a boy satyr. The flat surfaces of the marble block are still evident in the relief-like character of the satyr and the grapes, in contrast to the fullness and richness of the main figure.

THE *PIETÀ*. In 1498 Michelangelo, then twenty-three, accepted a commission for what became one of his most famous works, the *Pietà* (figs. 16.37–16.38). The subject, common in French and German Gothic sculpture but virtually unknown in Italy, was ordered by a French cardinal to decorate his tomb. To obtain marble of the highest quality, the sculptor made the first of many trips to the quarries at Carrara (see fig. 1.18). It was designed to be placed on or near the floor, so that the viewer had a clear view of the face of Christ. (It is now raised too high, has been tilted forward by a prop of cement at the back, and is enshrined against a background of opulent marble.)

The delicate slenderness of the figure of Christ can be compared to that of the wooden *Crucifix*. The complex rhythms of the drapery and Christ's exquisitely finished torso and limbs of Christ reveal a high level of refinement and delicacy. At certain points lines seem to cut into the marble surface, setting up a conflict between form and contour that was to persist for several years in Michelangelo's style. This is especially evident in the features of Christ and Mary; the delicate curls of Christ's moustache and beard, for example, are incised into the marble.

The serenity of Michelangelo's interpretation of this inherently tragic scene is engendered in part by the unified High Renaissance composition he developed, based on a reversal of natural figural proportions. So that Christ will not overwhelm Mary, she is larger in scale than he. No trace of pain remains in his face, and his wounds are barely noticeable. With a single, calm gesture, the Virgin invites us to meditate on the meaning of Christ's death.

In Michelangelo's lifetime there was speculation about the discrepancy between Mary's apparent age here and her actual years: she should be about eighteen years older than her son, who was thirty-three at the time of his death, but the artist has made her look no older than Christ. When asked about this by his fellow sculptor Ascanio Condivi, Michelangelo answered: "Do you not know that chaste women stay fresh much more than those who are not chaste? How much more in the case of the Virgin, who had never experienced the least lascivious desire that might change her body?"

16.37. MICHELANGELO. *Pietà*. 1498/99–1500. Marble, height 5'8½" (1.74 m). St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by the French Cardinal Jean de Bilhères Lagraulas for the chapel where he planned to be buried in Santa Petronilla, a mausoleum attached to Old St. Peter's.



16.38. Head of the Virgin Mary, detail of fig. 16.37.

Vasari recorded that when the group was first placed in St. Peter's, an astonished crowd of Lombards thought it was by a fellow countryman, whereupon Michelangelo stole into St. Peter's at night and added his signature: MICHELANGELUS BUONAROTUS FLORENT FACIE-BAT. The signature is unusual, for the traditional format would have used "fecit" (made) rather than "faciebat," the past progressive, which might be translated as "was making." The choice of tense relates to a topic of discussion at the Medici court, where this formulation was seen to carry the implication that true art was never completed. It is the only genuine signature that appears on any of Michelangelo's sculptures, although the story of its origin is probably apocryphal.

**THE *DONI MADONNA*.** The *Doni Madonna* (fig. 16.39) is probably the only preserved panel picture Michelangelo painted entirely himself—and even this

seems incomplete at points in the background. Its creation has been linked to the 1503 wedding of Angelo Doni, a prosperous weaver, to Maddalena Strozzi, of the famous banking family. This couple were immortalized a few years later in Raphael's portraits (see figs. 16.49–16.50). The *tondo* form is often associated with marriage in Renaissance art, while the composition has been adapted from the intertwined figures of Leonardo's lost cartoon for the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* (see p. 463), which Michelangelo must have seen in 1501, when he returned to Florence and was at work on the *David*. The compressed grouping has the power of a spring coiled tightly within the frame, and this tension is increased by the sharp modeling of the drapery folds and brilliant color contrasts. The yellow-orange silk of Joseph's mantle clashes with Mary's rose tunic in a manner that anticipates the astonishing colors that emerged when the Sistine Ceiling frescoes were cleaned.

The composition is stabilized by the horizontal band of stone separating foreground and background. In the smooth surfaces and precise contours of the foreground figures, Michelangelo created the masses as if he were

16.39. MICHELANGELO. *Doni Madonna*. c. 1503. Panel, diameter 3'11¼" (1.2 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned by Angelo Doni. The frame was designed by the artist.

Michelangelo's medium here includes both tempera and oil, but he applied oil glazes in a manner related to the tempera techniques he had learned as an apprentice. Whereas the Flemings shaded their colors from the highlights down to the darkest tone or black, Michelangelo shaded from the most intense area up toward the lightest value of the color. For example, in painting fabric that changes color in shadow (*cangiante*), such as Joseph's yellow-orange silk, he shaded from intense orange up to yellow highlights. The smoothness with which Michelangelo made these transitions is possible only because of the slow-drying potential of the oil medium.

working with marble instead of pigment. The modeling of the nude youths in the background, however, is softer; possibly Michelangelo began all the figures in this fluid style and only gradually brought some of them to the almost obsessive finish seen in the figure of Mary and the Christ Child.

Like many of Michelangelo's creations, the *Doni Madonna* defies exact interpretation, although certain elements are clear. Mary and Joseph appear to be presenting the Christ Child (*doni* is the Italian for "gifts"). The curious depression in the earth where the nude youths sit or lean is a half moon—a motif from the Strozzi arms, which appear in the frame of the painting. Such pictographic references to family names were customary: pebbles (*sassetti*) are evident in some of Ghirlandaio's Sassetti Chapel frescoes, and Medici motifs and symbols often appear in works they commissioned.

The inclusion of the Baptist, patron saint of the city, is traditional in Florentine images of the Madonna and Child. The saint's name was a common one in Florence, and the first four sons of Angelo and Maddalena Doni, all of whom died shortly after birth, were named Giovanni Battista. The flower that rises near the edge of the font recalls Isaiah's prophecy of the Virgin Birth: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." The picture was probably intended to place Angelo and Maddalena's conjugal life under the protection of the Holy Family, although we should not exclude the possibility that it might allude to the death of their first child. If this is the case, the date of the painting would be somewhat later.

*DAVID.* In 1501 Michelangelo received a commission from Pierre de Rohan, a Frenchman, to make a bronze copy of Donatello's bronze *David* (see fig. 10.22), which Rohan had seen during a visit to Florence in 1494. Michelangelo's work on this copy is documented in a drawing that shows a variation on Donatello's figure and a detail of the right arm (fig. 16.40). Unfortunately we cannot tell whether the completed bronze was an exact replica or a variation, for it was sent to France and has been lost. In one inscription jotted on the drawing, "David with his sling and I with my bow [drill], Michelangelo," the sculptor suggests that, just as David had faced an enemy with a sling, so he, Michelangelo, would meet challenges armed with a sculptor's running drill. This identification with the youthful hero who was a symbol of the Florentine Republic is informative for Michelangelo's other commission for a figure of David, also received in 1501.

Michelangelo's colossal *David* in marble (fig. 16.1) was intended for one of the buttresses of the Cathedral of Flo-



16.40. MICHELANGELO. *Drawing after Donatello's Bronze David.* c. 1501–4. Ink on paper, 10½ × 7¼" (26.4 × 18.5 cm). The Louvre, Paris.

Made in response to a commission from Pierre de Rohan for a copy of Donatello's statue (see fig. 10.22). Michelangelo's "copy," cast in 1508, was sent to France, where it was acquired by Florimund Robertet, who installed it in the courtyard of his palace in Blois. Later it was moved to his chateau at Bury, one of the earliest Renaissance buildings in France. Subsequently it disappeared and there is no record of its appearance. One inscription on the drawing is taken from a Petrarch sonnet; the fragment can be translated "Broken the tall column and the verdant laurel tree hewed down."

rence as part of a series of monumental figures to decorate the upper level of the building. These had been proposed as early as the Trecento, as is evident in Andrea da Firenze's view of the Florentine cathedral (see fig. 5.1). Donatello had been commissioned to make a marble *David* as part of this project (see p. 191), but it and its pendant *Isaiah* by Nanni di Banco were found to be too small for this location. Donatello had then been commissioned to make for this area a colossal figure of *Joshua* in terra-cotta painted to resemble stone (now lost). Donatello and Brunelleschi also made a model for a *Hercules* for the

same program. The goal of executing these figures in marble was revived in the 1460s, when the sculptor Agostino di Duccio was assigned a marble block some 17 feet tall, to sculpt a figure of David. Agostino, who may have been executing a model designed by the aged Donatello, abandoned the partially blocked-out stone, probably when Donatello died in 1466, and the block was assigned to Michelangelo in 1501. It was hardly an ideal commission; the piece of marble was tall but shallow and Michelangelo's design must have been somewhat compromised by Agostino's initial work on the block.

Michelangelo's hero is a boy of perhaps sixteen, not fully grown, but with the powerful muscles of a youth who has worked hard in the field. Michelangelo chose an unusual moment to represent, for he shows David before the battle. The sling rests over his shoulder and the stone is still in his right hand, while his muscles are taut and his brow is wrinkled in a defiant scowl. The figure pulls powerfully to the left, away from the implied enemy, and David's apprehension is further indicated by the swelling veins in the hand and the tense, contracted muscles of the abdomen. This *David*, Michelangelo's first adventure into the realm of the colossal (the figure was sometimes referred to in documents as the "colossus"), can be interpreted as a symbol not only of the Florentine Republic but also of humanity raised to a new power—a plane of superhuman grandeur and beauty.

The pose, partly conditioned by the existing shape of the block, must also be understood in terms of the intended position of the statue on the Duomo. Placed on one of the buttress pedestals (see fig. 6.7), the young hero would have looked defiantly out over the city, gazing to the north. The emphatic muscles and taut rib cage, the heavy projections of the hair, the sharp undercutting of the eyes, and the frowning brow were all intended to register from a distance. In the forms of the face, the conflict between mass and line, noted earlier in the *Pietà*, reaches a climax of intensity.

When Michelangelo completed the *David* in 1504, however, the Florentines decided not to place it on the Cathedral. A commission was formed to choose where the statue should go; testimony survives recording the opinions of Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Giuliano and Antonio da Sangallo, Piero di Cosimo, and other artists, as well as artisans and other citizens. Leonardo wanted the colossus to be in the Loggia della Signoria, the great three-arched portico for public ceremonies to the west of the Palazzo dei Priori (see fig. 2.40). The Sangallo brothers insisted that it be kept out of the rain because the marble was soft and had already suffered from exposure. Piero di Cosimo suggested that the commission ask Michelangelo. There is no record that it ever did, but it is

unlikely that he would have favored a position in the Loggia dei Priori, which would have dwarfed the colossus with its huge, open arches. The statue was ultimately placed in front of the Palazzo dei Priori as a symbol of the valiant republic, whose representatives had just elected Piero Soderini *gonfaloniere* (standard-bearer) for life in the hope of preserving the city's continued freedom from the Medici. It took four days to haul the statue on rollers to its final position. The political import of the figure, present from the start in the choice of David for one of the colossal figures on the Duomo—a building of the highest religious and civic importance—was demonstrated when it was attacked with stones by a band of youths, probably Medici supporters.

The total nudity of the *David* is in keeping with Michelangelo's views on the divinity of the human body, while its emphatic muscularity is typical of the sculptor's style. The prudery of Soderini's republic kept the statue hidden from public gaze for two months until a brass girdle with twenty-eight hammered copper leaves could be devised and hung about the young hero's waist to mask the genitals.

At the time of the third expulsion of the Medici from Florence, in 1527, a bench thrown from a window of the Palazzo dei Priori shattered the *David*'s left arm and hand. The pieces were rescued by Vasari and Francesco Salviati, who were in their teens at the time, and kept until they could be reattached many years later. Just as the Sangallo brothers feared, the marble eventually suffered from exposure, and the fine finish on the top of the head and the upper surfaces of the shoulders is gone. In the nineteenth century the statue was removed to a skylit rotunda built especially for it at Florence's Accademia.

How Michelangelo approached a standing figure when there were no restrictions from a limited block of marble is revealed in the unfinished *St. Matthew* (fig. 16.41), the only one of a series of twelve apostles commissioned for the interior of the Duomo that was even begun. As he prepared to carve a full-sized figure in marble, Michelangelo would make sketches out of clay, wax, and other soft materials. Vasari, who worked for a while as an assistant to Michelangelo, utilized what was probably the sculptor's metaphor when he compared the process of carving a statue from a block of marble to that of lowering the water from a figure in a bath. The sculptor would draw the contours on the faces of the block and then pursue these profiles inward until the process of removing the stone liberated the figure. In one of his poems, Michelangelo compared this procedure to that of God the Creator liberating man from matter.

St. Matthew holds up in his left hand a huge book as a symbol of his Gospel. The figure moves forcefully in three

16.41. MICHELANGELO. *St. Matthew.* 1503–8. Marble, 8'10"
(2.68 m). Galleria dell' Accademia, Florence. Commissioned by the
Opera del Duomo.

dimensions, his left knee crossing over his right leg and his head thrusting back and up; in comparison the two-dimensional movement of the *David* is readily apparent. The position St. Matthew assumes here, with the limbs counterpoised around the vertical axis of the figure, is known as the *figura serpentinata,* a term first used by the Renaissance theoretician G.P. Lomazzo, who attributed the pose specifically to Michelangelo. For Lomazzo, designing a *figura serpentinata* was the ultimate demonstration of the taste and inventiveness of the sculptor.

The unfinished portions of *St. Matthew* show the stages of Michelangelo's working practice. The marks of the drill used to define major elements can still be seen. Certain areas have been roughed out with a pointed cylindrical chisel, while some surfaces have reached a higher state of completion under the strokes of a coarse, two-toothed chisel. A three-toothed chisel was used to add more detail, and it was with this tool that Michelangelo achieved the breathing, pulsating surface much praised by Vasari. These chisel marks warrant close study, for they show how Michelangelo attacked the marble in individual strokes. Each stroke brings us into intimate contact with the artist. The final surface finish would have been created with a file and by polishing with pumice and straw pads, destroying the evidence of the energetic passage of Michelangelo's hand that we find so moving today.

The position of the body in the *St. Matthew* conveys the subject's spiritual intent; the dramatic intensity of the gospel writer is conveyed in his pose even though the sculpture is unfinished. Michelangelo seems to have proceeded in a manner that satisfied his need to communicate emotion, giving the figure expression at each step of its release from the block. These unfinished figures suggest that for Michelangelo the act of creation was a dialogue between himself and the figure he was creating.

Shortly after the *David* was set in place, the sculptor received his first commission for a large fresco, the *Battle of Cascina* (fig. 16.42) for the Sala del Cinquecento in the Palazzo dei Priori, the same room where Leonardo had already been working for a year on the *Battle of Anghiari* (see fig. 16.30). Michelangelo never completed the painting, and the large cartoon he created has been lost; the only evidence for the composition is a mediocre copy of the central sections and several beautiful figure studies (figs. 16.42–16.43) The moment chosen for his subject may seem trivial—the Florentine soldiers, cooling off in the Arno, are alerted by an alarm and caught in the act of struggling into their clothes and armor—yet, like its predecessor, the *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs* (see fig. 16.34), the *Battle of Cascina* gave Michelangelo the opportunity to demonstrate his mastery of the nude body. Working in secret in the hospital of Sant' Onofrio, he produced a

16.42. ARISTOTILE DA SANGALLO. *Battle of Cascina*, partial copy after MICHELANGELO. Early-sixteenth-century copy of central section. Grisaille on panel, 30 × 52" (76 × 132 cm). Collection of the Earl of Leicester, Holkham Hall (Courtesy Courtauld Institute of Art, London).

Michelangelo's original was commissioned by the Florentine Republic for the Sala del Cinquecento at the Palazzo dei Priori, Florence. The central figures of the composition were reproduced in an engraving in 1524, thus extending the influence of Michelangelo's lost work; the design reappears, for example, on a majolica plate made several decades later.

composition of interlocking figures, turning, twisting, climbing, blowing trumpets, reaching to help comrades. Michelangelo probably derived much of his knowledge of figures climbing out of the water and pulling on clothes from visits to a Florentine public bath, which Leonardo frequented every Saturday for the same purpose.

The copy demonstrates how the work as a whole must have revealed Michelangelo's new vision of the power and energy of the human body. According to Vasari, some figures in the cartoon were drawn with cross hatching, others with shading and highlighted with white. The drawing (fig. 16.43) serves as a corrective to the rather dry,



16.43. MICHELANGELO. *A Male Figure Seen from Behind, Study for the Battle of Cascina*. c. 1504. Pen and ink over some black chalk, 16⅛ × 11¼" (40.9 × 28.5 cm). Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

labored effect of the copy. Here Michelangelo adopted the cross-hatching technique that he had learned from his master Ghirlandaio, but strengthened it, using longer strokes. His intimate knowledge of anatomy enabled him to use curved strokes that follow the muscular structure, and he emphasized the contours to suggest the rippling muscles of a figure in movement. The particular figure shown here appears in one of Michelangelo's early studies for the central grouping of bathers, but was not worked into the final composition. Its technique helps us to understand the potent effect that the original, full-sized cartoon must have had. During its brief existence, the cartoon was widely imitated by Florentine masters as an example of how nude figures in action ought to be composed.

## Raphael in Perugia and Florence

After Leonardo and Michelangelo, the third and youngest member of the trio of High Renaissance masters is Raffaello Santi (or Sanzio; 1483–1520), known to us as Raphael. He was not an innovator in the same sense as Leonardo and Michelangelo, but for five centuries Raphael has been praised as the perfect High Renaissance painter. This is not difficult to understand, for in his art noble and ideal individuals move with dignity and grace through a calm, intelligible, and ordered world. His pictures mirror Renaissance aspirations for human conduct and Renaissance goals for the human mind. He unified the movements of his figures and the spaces he created for them into integrated, harmonious compositions. Raphael's order is not merely intellectual or contrived, however. The figures in his mature works seem to be impelled by an energy that causes them to twist and turn gracefully and to group into oval and spherical compositions. So easy is this motion, so harmonious the relations of the figures, that even at moments of drama they seem to radiate a super-human calm.

Born in Urbino, Raphael was brought up in its extraordinary atmosphere of literary, philosophical, and artistic culture and cosmopolitan elegance (see pp. 378–84). His father, Giovanni Santi, was a rather mediocre painter and poet who wrote a rhymed chronicle that provides information about the reputation of Quattrocento painters. Both father and son seem to have had access to the Montefeltro court and the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino (see fig. 14.29), where the young Raphael could have seen works by Piero della Francesca, Botticelli, the Laurana brothers, Uccello, Melozzo da Forlì, the Spaniard Alonso Berruguete, and the Netherlander Justus of Ghent.

When Raphael was eleven, his father died. We are not certain at what age the boy went to Perugia to be apprenticed to Perugino, but according to Vasari he was brought to Perugino's studio by his father, who had written that Perugino was "equal in age and endeavor" to Leonardo. Raphael seems to have absorbed with ease both the virtues and the clichés of Perugino's style, and he rapidly became the outstanding member of a busy *bottega*; by the age of sixteen he was already influencing other artists. At the same time he was learning how to manage a workshop, which during his maturity in Rome would help him maintain an impressive production schedule.

It is often nearly impossible to separate the style of Raphael in these early years from that of his master. The young artist's hand must have been at work in many of Perugino's major commissions. Raphael's debt to Perugino is evident when we compare his *Marriage of the Virgin* (fig. 16.44), which Raphael proudly signed and dated in 1504 when he was twenty-one years old, to Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (see fig. 14.16). There is the same array of foreground figures, the same polygonal background temple, the same intervening piazza. Even the colors of the painting are derived from Perugino: the cloudless blue sky; the strong, deep blues, roses, and yellows of the drapery; the sun-warmed tan of the stone; and the blue-green of the hills.

A second glance will disclose how the young painter improved on his master. The serenity of this important early work demonstrates a High Renaissance integration of form and space. It was presumably commissioned for an altar dedicated to the Virgin's wedding ring in a church in Città di Castello, where Raphael painted several other pictures. According to the *Golden Legend*, the suitors for Mary, a virgin in the Temple, were to present rods (usually represented as sticks) to the high priest, and Mary's hand would be granted to the one whose rod produced a blossom. Joseph holds his flowering rod in one hand, while the other, bearing a ring, is joined to Mary's by the high priest. On the left stand the other Temple virgins, on the right the rejected suitors, one of whom breaks his barren rod over his knees. The graceful figures are woven into a unity unknown in Perugino's art. The perspective orthogonals lead past the steps into the Temple, and we look directly through it to the horizon, while hills frame the structure.

The architecture of the Temple reflects the ideas of both Bramante, who had already been authorized to create the Tempietto (see fig. 17.9), and Leonardo (see fig. 16.8). Its lofty shape also suggests the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem; this Muslim structure had been built on the site of Solomon's Temple and was often identified with it, making it an appropriate backdrop for a representation of the Virgin's marriage.

Raphael's *St. George and the Dragon* (fig. 16.45) betrays the influence of Florentine art—especially Donatello's St. George relief (see fig. 7.14) and Leonardo's

16.44. RAPHAEL. *Marriage of the Virgin*. 1504. Panel, 5'7" × 3'10½" (1.7 × 1.2 m). Brera Gallery, Milan.
Probably commissioned by the Albizzini family of Città di Castello.

16.45. RAPHAEL. *St. George and the Dragon.* 1505–6. Panel, 11⅛ × 8½" (28.3 × 21.6 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Mellon Collection). The painting is signed RAPHELO V (Raphael of Urbino) on the horse's bridle.

before he had decided where the features were to go, Raphael let his hand revolve in a series of spontaneous curving motions. The resulting ovoid and spiral forms convey their energy to the figures and also help to explain the smoothly finished shapes of the completed paintings. Once the relationship of masses was decided, Raphael condensed them into a unified Leonardesque pyramid.

Probably the first of the Madonnas is the *Madonna of the Meadows* (fig. 16.47). The painting contains echoes of Leonardo's compositions with intertwined figures (see figs. 16.27–16.28), especially in the placing of the Virgin's leg and foot. Most of the series belong to this new type, which we might even call the Madonna of the Land because an open expanse of Florentine countryside seems to be placed under the protection of the Virgin and Child and the infant Baptist, patron of the city. Here Raphael, as throughout the series, let the Virgin's neckline dip to follow the curves of the horizon and then put her head on the same level as the hills. The clear, simple coloring and the easy upward movement of reciprocally balancing forms are Raphael's own, as is the return of energy from the downcast eyes of

*Battle of Anghiari* (see fig. 16.30)—to such a degree that we suspect the painter had already visited Florence. He must also have visited Rome, since the Torre della Milizia, a medieval structure still standing in the ancient Imperial Fora, is portrayed just above the muzzle of the horse. Raphael's forms here are carefully integrated: the warrior saint on his rearing charger crosses the masses of the landscape to create an X-shape and, as a result, the downward thrust of the lance discharges into the monster's breast all the energies of the picture. From the painter's proud signature on the bridle to the spiraling curves of the horse's tail and the clarity of the foliage, the forms have taken on a metallic precision. The gleaming armor and the reflection of the princess in the water are rendered with almost Netherlandish delicacy.

Probably sometime in 1505 Raphael settled in Florence, where his master Perugino had painted many frescoes and altarpieces. He fell into an avid market; in three years, he painted no fewer than seventeen surviving Madonnas and Holy Families plus other major works for Florentine patrons. Drawings (fig. 16.46) show how he worked: even



16.46. RAPHAEL. *Studies of the Madonna and Child.* c. 1507–8. Pen and ink, 10 × 7¼" (25.4 × 18.4 cm). British Museum, London.

the Virgin to the group below. The halo, now reduced to a simple circle of gold seen in depth, enhances the grace of the linear movement and completes the balance between the ovoid forms and the distant landscape.

Raphael's Florentine Madonnas seem somehow less complete than works of this period by Leonardo and Michelangelo because Raphael was less interested in the problems of anatomy and expression so important to the two older artists. To Raphael a picture was complete once its main masses were posed in a satisfying relationship, and line, color, and surface had a fluid interrelationship; at this point in his career he was not interested in adding further detail. This style is completely appropriate for his subject matter. In his Florentine Madonnas Raphael presents a noble and serene existence in which the pictorial harmonies seem to emanate naturally from the divine figures. These gentle Virgins and sweet children are gracefully poised against the answering background of hills and deep blue sky.

In the *Small Cowper Madonna* (fig. 16.48), one of the most intimate of the series, the Virgin is seated upon a low



16.48. RAPHAEL. *Small Cowper Madonna.* c. 1505. Panel, 23³/₈ × 17³/₈" (59.5 × 44 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The church in the background closely resembles the sanctuary of S. Bernardino outside Urbino.



16.47. RAPHAEL. *Madonna of the Meadows.* 1505 or 1506. Panel, 44¹/₂ × 34¹/₄" (113 × 87 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. The date on Mary's neckline can be read as either 1505 or 1506. Perhaps commissioned by Taddeo Taddei.

bench before a landscape of road-traversed meadows and clumps of trees. The asymmetry of the hills is related to the pose of Christ's figure, and the smooth, gliding forms of the Virgin's hair are continued in the veils that course lightly about her shoulders. Christ's head moves slightly away as his arms complete the circling motion of the veils, creating a composition that is simple, graceful, and harmonious.

Some of the most convincing portraitists—Raphael, Hans Holbein, Nicolas Poussin, Jean-Dominique Ingres—sharply separated this vein of their production from the idealism of their more formal work. Raphael, cool and detached by nature, seems to have been especially interested in capturing the character of his sitter. It should be noted, however, that he did not dwell on individual idiosyncrasies in the manner of the Netherlandish realists. He set his Florentine patrons, like his Madonnas, against a background of landscape and sky delicately adjusted to the shapes of their bodies and his understanding of the forces of their personalities.

16.49. RAPHAEL. *Angelo Doni*. c. 1506. Panel, 24½ × 17¼"
(63 × 45 cm). Pitti Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned
by Angelo Doni.



16.50. RAPHAEL. *Maddalena Strozzi Doni*. c. 1506. Panel, 24½ ×
17¼" (63 × 45 cm). Pitti Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned
by Angelo Doni.

Angelo Doni, for example (fig. 16.49), relaxes outdoors
with one arm on a balustrade, the shaggy masses of his
hair reflected in the trees at the lower right, the bulky
shapes of his arms and hands in the low hills of the back-
ground. The forms of his wife, Maddalena Strozzi Doni
(fig. 16.50), are also integrated with the landscape, to the
point that the artist repeated the pattern of the beaded
border of her transparent shoulder veil in the foliage of the
slender tree. As in Perugino's *Francesco delle Opere* (see
fig. 14.20), an effect of energy is obtained by individual
wisps of hair silhouetted against the sky. Angelo, the
wealthy wool merchant, is impressive at thirty—cool, self-
contained, firm. The portrait of his fifteen-year-old bride,
however, has to compete with her obvious prototype, the
*Mona Lisa* (see fig. 16.29). There are no mysteries con-
cealed here—but neither, at this juncture, are there many in
Raphael's art, except for his uncanny sense of proportion
and balance. To the successful young painter in command
of the resources of the new style, the unknowable of
Leonardo may not have seemed worth knowing. He seems

to have been satisfied with his compositional perfection
and, in these portraits as never in his Madonnas, he
devoted careful attention to the modeling of the features
and hands of husband and wife, even to their rings, the
damask and moiré of Maddalena's dress, and the careful
approximation of her shoulders and chest to the shape and
texture of the pearl that hangs from her pendant. Like
Michelangelo, Raphael was destined to enter a new dimen-
sion once he left Florence for papal Rome, but that crown-
ing phase of his activities belongs to the next chapter.

## Fra Bartolommeo

From his Florentine drawings, we know that Raphael was
familiar with the works of Leonardo and Michelangelo.
He also learned from—and influenced—a Florentine
named Baccio della Porta (1472–1517), who became
known as Fra Bartolommeo after he became a monk at San
Marco. Fra Bartolommeo had been greatly influenced by
the works of Leonardo and, by the time Raphael arrived in

Florence, was at work on his *Vision of St. Bernard* (fig. 16.51), an obvious attempt to update Filippino Lippi's painting of the same subject (see fig. 13.31) in terms of the new High Renaissance style. Everything immediate, personal, and introspective and all references to daily existence have been discarded in the search for the new simplicity and idealism. The saint kneels before a classical pedestal on which books are open, but we are not asked to imagine that this is his outdoor study, as in Filippino. The setting is an aesthetic device designed for compositional purposes, and the two other saints (apparently Anthony Abbot and John the Evangelist) were most likely included at the request of the patron.

In contrast to Filippino's version, Mary is a heavenly vision, touching nothing earthly with her feet or hands; carrying her smiling child, she is borne into the scene by angels. One of the angels holds an open book before the saint, who is, however, so lost in the transcendent vision that he does not even glance at it. The picture is in poor condition—much of the upper paint surface is lost—but the atmospheric landscape is intact, and the figures and drapery move with a grace that must have impressed the young Raphael. The gravity and amplitude of the forms are characteristic of the High Renaissance. The device of a little picture-within-the-picture is perhaps borrowed from Fra Angelico's altarpiece for Fra Bartolommeo's home monastery of San Marco (see fig. 9.4), but Fra Bartolommeo has muted the illusion by leaning a book against it. For him, as for Fra Angelico, the device serves as a foreground counterpart for the vanishing point of the perspective, thus achieving a kind of spatial harmony.

In the following chapter we leave Florence for Rome, where the patronage of Pope Julius II encouraged the development of the High Renaissance style.



16.51. FRA BARTOLOMMEO. *Vision of St. Bernard*. 1504–7. Panel, 7' × 7'2¼" (2.1 × 2.2 m). Accademia, Florence. Commissioned for the Badia, Florence.

# 17

# THE HIGH RENAISSANCE IN ROME

The next phase of Italian art and history is dominated, at the outset at least, by a single figure, Pope Julius II (fig. 17.2). As Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, he had exercised great power during the pontificates of Sixtus IV (r. 1471–84), his uncle, and Sixtus's successor, Innocent VIII (r. 1484–92), but in 1492, when Rodrigo Borgia ascended the papal throne as Alexander VI, Giuliano left Rome. In 1503 he was elected pope following the less-than-month-long pontificate of Pius III, and thus began, as a result of Julius's patronage, an artistic revolution that started in the Vatican and expanded to Rome and central Italy, much of the peninsula, and even to other parts of Europe. Julius immediately set about a program of reform in the Roman Church, while in the secular sphere he re-established law and order in the crime-ridden streets of Rome and subjugated the rebellious Roman nobles. Next he set out to reconquer the lost provinces of the papacy and to drive foreign invaders out of Italy, beginning with the French in the north. His success there would doubtless have been followed by an expulsion of the Spaniards in the south and the unification of the peninsula under papal leadership if death had not stopped him after ten years.

The last decade of Julius's life, when he was in his sixties, treated Europe to the spectacle of the pope standing in armor beside blazing cannons, attacking his enemies in language both coarse and violent, beating his cardinals with his cane when they hesitated to follow him through snow that was breast-high on the horses, growing a beard in defiance of all custom and tradition, and acting in general like an unchained giant loose on the map of Italy.

The modest attempts of Quattrocento popes to transform medieval Rome into a classical city were superseded by Julius's determination to rebuild whole sections, driving broad avenues bordered with palaces through hovels and ruins alike, and replacing the basilica of St. Peter's, now more than a thousand years old, with a new structure that would embody the imperial splendor and spiritual drive of his regime. Intellectually and artistically, the Rome of Julius II must have been an exciting place. It was also dusty



17.2. CARADOSSO. *Medal of Julius II*, 1506. Bronze, diameter 2¼" (5.7 cm; shown actual size). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.
Caradosso (c. 1452–c. 1527) was Bramante's collaborator for architectural ornament for his Milanese projects. The reverse of this medal shows Bramante's plan for St. Peter's (see fig. 17.11). This and a second medal, with a slightly different portrait, were cast for the founding of St. Peter's.

*Opposite:* 17.1. MICHELANGELO and others. Frescoes for the Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome (see also figs. 13.19, 14.16–14.17, 17.23, 20.1–20.4). The ceiling measures 45 × 128' (13.75 × 39 m).

and noisy from demolitions and reconstructions, and was repeatedly threatened by the collapse of the pope's political schemes and invasion by his enemies.

The development of the Julian High Renaissance was supported by the pope's interest in reviving the grandeur of ancient Rome, which included the collection and display of ancient works. Any ancient remains were investigated and the area where the ruins of Nero's Golden House had been discovered in the late Quattrocento was of special interest; visitors were lowered on knotted ropes into the buried rooms to see the painted *grotteschi* (see pp. 374–75) that influenced Filippino Lippi and other artists. It was here in 1506 that a large sculptural group was discovered (fig. 17.3). This impressive sculpture gained added stature when the architect Giuliano da Sangallo (see pp. 309–12) identified it as the *Laocoön and His Sons* described in the *Natural History* of the ancient author Pliny (36.37–38),



**17.3. HAGESANDROS, ATHENODOROS, and POLYDOROS.** *Laocoön and His Sons.* Early first century BCE (?). Marble, height 8' (2.4 m). Musei Vaticani, Rome.

The three sculptors who carved this work were Greek, but they were probably working for a Roman patron who had commissioned a work reminiscent of earlier Hellenistic art. After the work was discovered, a number of copies were made in marble and bronze in different sizes. In 1523 Pope Leo X commissioned the sculptor Baccio Bandinelli to make a full-sized marble copy to be presented to King Francis I of France.

who also named the artists. The Renaissance thus gained an ancient sculpture of high quality made by named artists and mentioned in an authoritative ancient text. That Pliny had described it as "of all paintings and sculptures, the most worthy of admiration" only increased the attention the sculpture received. Pope Julius II bought it almost immediately and, less than six months after the discovery, had it installed in a niche in the courtyard of his new palace, the Belvedere (see figs. 17.17–17.18). The impact of the sculpture was immediate; the impassioned struggle and dramatic muscular exertion of its figures played a role in Michelangelo's frescoes for the Sistine Chapel Ceiling (see figs. 17.23–17.39), for example, which was begun only two years after the *Laocoön*'s discovery.

Another influential ancient work was the so-called *Belvedere Torso*, a fragment of an ancient figure (fig. 17.4). The *Belvedere Torso* was first recorded in the 1430s, in a Roman collection, but its fame dates from the first decade of the sixteenth century, when it became part of the Vatican collections and was put on display in the Belvedere Palace. During the Renaissance ancient fragments were normally restored to give an impression of completeness, but this torso was not touched; tradition has it that Michelangelo refused the opportunity to re-create the limbs and head, fearing he would be unequal to the task. The incomplete torso became a challenge to the imaginations of Renaissance and later artists, who attempted in drawings, paintings, and sculptures to reconstruct the original arrangement of head, arms, and lower legs. Among the Cinquecento representations inspired by this fragment, perhaps the most famous are the young men that decorate the Sistine Chapel Ceiling (see figs. 17.23, 17.25, 17.29, 17.32, 17.34). The combined impact of the *Belvedere Torso* and the *Laocoön* on the development of High Renaissance sculpture and painting in Rome is incalculable.

One can hardly imagine Julius II calling upon Botticelli or Perugino to create the visual symbols needed for his vision of a militant, expansive papacy. High Renaissance style, forged in the crisis of republican Florence, was a perfect instrument for him, and Michelangelo the ideal artist. Later Julius and Michelangelo were joined by Raphael and also by Bramante, who was to become the most important High Renaissance architect and a close friend and confidant of the pope. The painters who had been summoned by Sixtus IV for the first program in the Sistine Chapel had returned to their home towns without creating a common style. But, whether or not they knew it was happening, the three great artists who carried out Julius's projects did, to some extent, submerge their personalities under the inspiration of their dynamic and demanding patron.
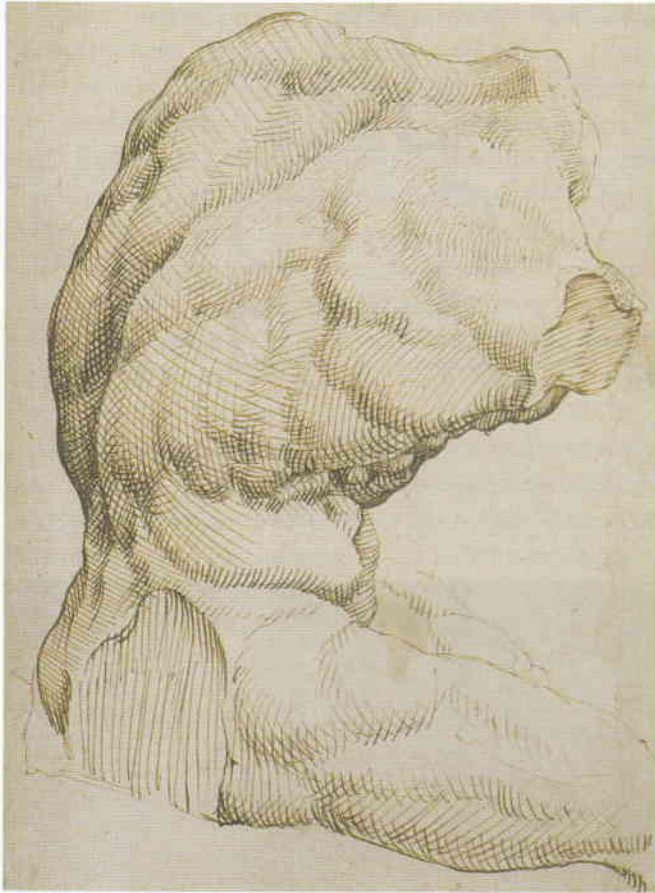
*Above:* 17.4. MAARTEN VAN HEEMSKERCK. *Drawing of the Belvedere Torso*, 1532–36/37. Pen and ink on paper. Kupferstich-kabinett, Berlin.

The sculptural fragment known as the *Belvedere Torso*, which is signed by Apollonios of Athens, son of Nestor, is probably a work of the first century BCE emulating the style of the third century BCE. The animal skin on which the figure sits is sometimes thought to be that of a lion, which would identify the figure as Hercules. Heemskerck was a Dutch painter who visited Rome, where he met Vasari, in 1532–36/37. His drawings of Roman ruins and Renaissance works provide us with important information about the appearance of Rome in the 1530s (see fig. 20.18). When he saw the *Belvedere Torso*, it was still lying on its back. Of this fragment from antiquity, Michelangelo is reported to have said: "This is the work of a man who knew more than nature."

Grander in its scope, freer in its dynamism, the Roman period of the High Renaissance is distinct from its Florentine predecessor and it developed rapidly from phase to more majestic phase. Pope Julius II, as patron, exercised a formative influence on High Renaissance style and should be considered one of its creators. He determined what was to be built, carved, or painted and by whom. He probably played a role in choosing the subject matter and how it was to be treated. Such was the grandeur of Julius's undertak-

ings that Italian art could never return to its former, more modest, self.

## Donato Bramante

Donato di Pascuccio (1444–1514), known as Bramante, was from Urbino. He started as a painter of considerable creativity and first appears as an architect in Milan in 1485, when he undertook the rebuilding of Santa Maria presso San Satiro (fig. 17.5). Basically Albertian in its single-story, barrel-vaulted nave with round arches supported by piers decorated with Corinthian pilasters, the church culminates in a crossing crowned by a Pantheon-like dome that gives a hint of how Alberti's domes for the Malatesta Temple (see fig. 10.3) and Sant'Andrea at Mantua (see fig. 10.7) might have appeared. The choir seems to stretch for three bays beyond the crossing, under a barrel vault matching that of the nave, but the ground plan reveals that the space that we seem to see here does



17.5. DONATO BRAMANTE. Sta. Maria presso S. Satiro, Milan, interior view toward choir. 1485. Height of arch 34'9" (10.6 m).
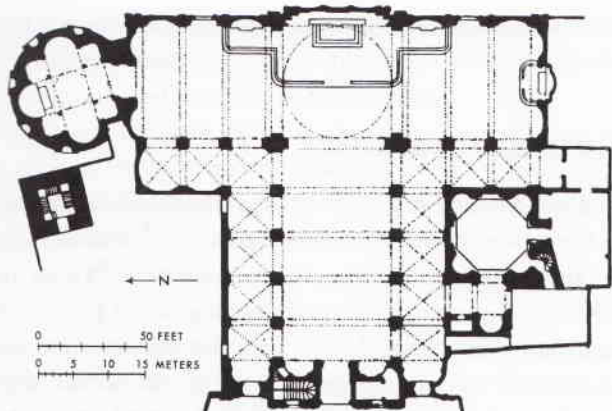
17.6. BRAMANTE. Plan of Sta. Maria presso S. Satiro, Milan. 1485.
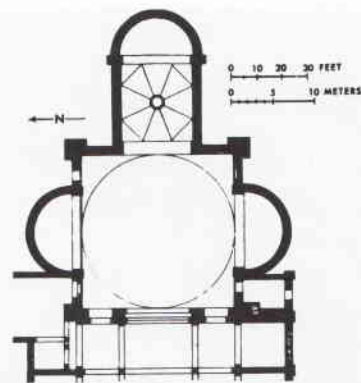


17.7. BRAMANTE. Plan of Sta. Maria delle Grazie. 1492–97. Commissioned by Ludovico Sforza.

not exist (fig. 17.6). A street directly behind the plot prevented Bramante from building a choir, so he was forced, in a triumph of the Renaissance art of deceit, to create this illusion. The effect is the result of carefully calculated decoration on a virtually flat wall; the actual depth is only a matter of a few feet. The false choir of Santa Maria presso San Satiro indicates Bramante's preoccupation with space, and is a premonition, in miniature, of how the interior of Julius II's St. Peter's (see figs. 17.13–17.15) might have looked had it been completed and decorated according to Bramante's plans.

Another Milanese church, Santa Maria delle Grazie, had been begun in the Gothic style in 1463. It was located in the area of Milan where both Leonardo and Bramante lived in the 1480s and 1490s. In 1492 Duke Ludovico Sforza ordered the choir to be replaced by a Renaissance structure intended to house the tombs of the Sforza dynasty. He later decided that the nave should also be torn down and a new nave and façade built, but this larger project was never completed. Although no document connects Bramante's name with the present apse, transept, crossing, and dome, they are usually considered to be by him and to be strongly influenced by Leonardo da Vinci, whose ideas on centrally planned churches they reflect (see fig. 16.8). The structure is composed, like the examples in Leonardo's drawings, of permutations and combinations of geometric forms such as cubes, hemispheres, half-cylinders, and the like (fig. 17.7). Bramante transformed the oculi of the Gothic church into circles that are treated as ornament in the exterior decoration. In the interior (fig. 17.8), where apses curve outward around the dome, the circles are used to decorate the arches below the dome. The effect is bold, dramatic, and thoroughly Renaissance in its decorative motifs.

The fall of the Sforza dynasty in 1499 left Bramante without work at what was, for the period, the advanced



17.8. BRAMANTE. Sta. Maria delle Grazie, Milan, interior view toward choir. 1492–97.

age of fifty-four. He moved to Rome and immediately found work as an architect during the last years of the pontificate of Alexander VI and then under Julius II.

The Tempietto ("Little Temple"; fig. 17.9) was commissioned to mark the spot where, at the time, it was believed that St. Peter had been crucified. Instead of the Corinthian

and Ionic orders preferred by Quattrocento architects, Bramante here chose the more severe Roman Doric, adding symbols in the metopes that refer to the Eucharist and papal authority. The circular shape, however, which he could have studied in ancient round temples in Rome and Tivoli, encouraged Bramante to abandon the planar quality of Quattrocento architecture, which had already been challenged by Leonardo's radial schemes. The Tempietto exists in space like a work of sculpture, an effect enhanced by the deep niches in the outer walls. As we move about it, its peristyle and steps seem to revolve around the central cylinder.

The effect Bramante intended can be realized today only if we re-create in our minds the surrounding circular courtyard, which was never built (fig. 17.10). Each column of the outer peristyle would have related radially to a column of the Tempietto, linking the inner and outer structures to each other across the courtyard. This association would have created a unity that is the product rather than the sum

of its parts—an analysis that makes the Tempietto the architectural equivalent of Leonardo's experiments with pyramidal compositions of interlocking figures (see p. 463; figs. 16.27–16.28). The intellectual order and inherent majesty of this building, whose solids and spaces are beautifully harmonized, help explain the choice of Bramante as papal architect by Julius II.

In 1506, with the excuse that it was in danger of imminent collapse, the pope commissioned Bramante to rebuild the most sacred areas of St. Peter's, the archetype of Early Christian church architecture in the West, which had been sanctified by more than eleven hundred years of ritual and was filled with monuments of sculpture and painting. In the mid-Quattrocento, Pope Nicholas V had transferred the seat of the papacy from the Lateran Palace to the Vatican, and a new apse was begun to replace the Early Christian one while preserving the nave; Bernardo Rossellino was the builder, but the apse may have been designed by Alberti. Julius II apparently asked Bramante to design a new apse, but whether he originally intended to save the nave of the old basilica is uncertain. In any case,



17.9. BRAMANTE. Tempietto, S. Pietro in Montorio, Rome. Authorized 1502; completed after 1511. Height 47' (14 m). Commissioned by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. The columns used here are *spoglia* from antiquity, although the ancient building from which these sixteen columns were taken is unknown.
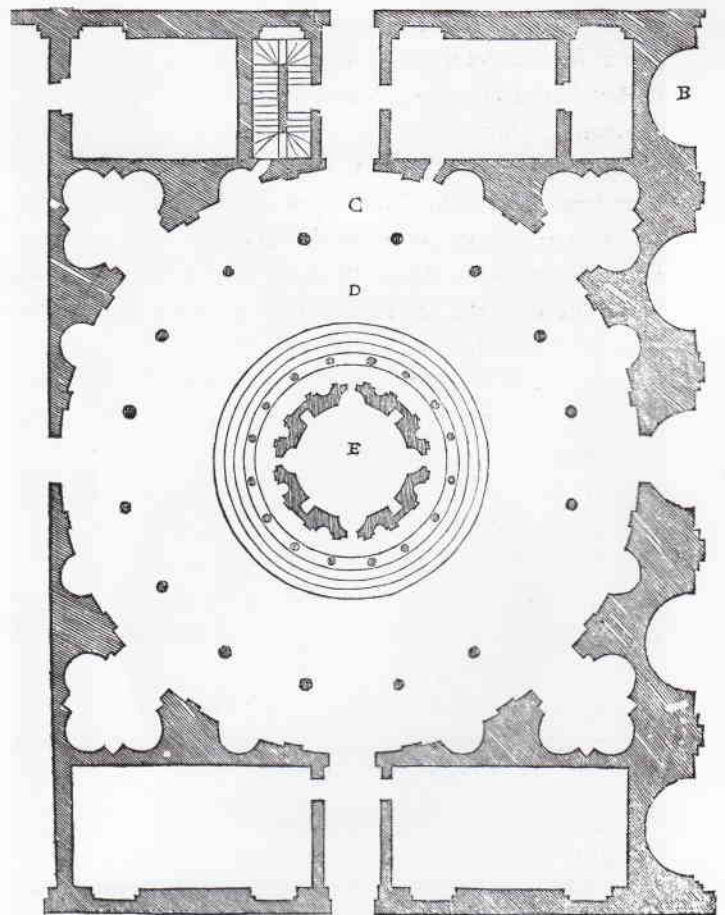


17.10. BRAMANTE. Plan of Tempietto with proposed courtyard, S. Pietro in Montorio, Rome (from Sebastiano Serlio, *Il terzo libro d'architettura*, Venice, 1551).

he soon decided a completely new structure was called for. To Michelangelo's anger, Julius had some of the monolithic ancient columns that lined the nave pulled down. This gesture of negation and affirmation launched the greatest architectural vision of the Renaissance on its perilous course. Twelve architects and twenty-two popes later, the building Bramante began was completed but, with its Michelangelesque shell and Baroque extensions, Bramante's design is barely recognizable.

The very grandiosity of the Julius–Bramante project is perhaps a symptom of the weaknesses of the High Renaissance as well as an expression of its ideals and aspirations. The immense structure could not possibly have been completed during the reign of the aging pope, but it was commenced with surprising speed considering the difficult situations that Julius and his papacy were facing. The projected costs were overwhelming; when Raphael took over as architect in 1514, he wrote that this "greatest building work ever seen" would cost more than a million gold ducats. To finance the construction the Vatican encouraged the sale of indulgences, a practice that aroused such opposition from Martin Luther and the German princes that it eventually led to the Protestant Reformation.

Although there is more of Bramante's design in the interior than is often realized, we can reconstruct his exterior only through drawings by others and through a medal (fig. 17.11) by Caradosso made to celebrate the beginning of construction. The plan and axonometric reconstruction illustrated here (fig. 17.12) shows the Greek-cross plan, with its great central dome and four equal arms ending in apses. Filling the corners are four smaller Greek crosses (also domed) on the interior and four towers on the outside.



17.12. BRAMANTE. Plan and axonometric reconstruction of his design for St. Peter's of 1506.
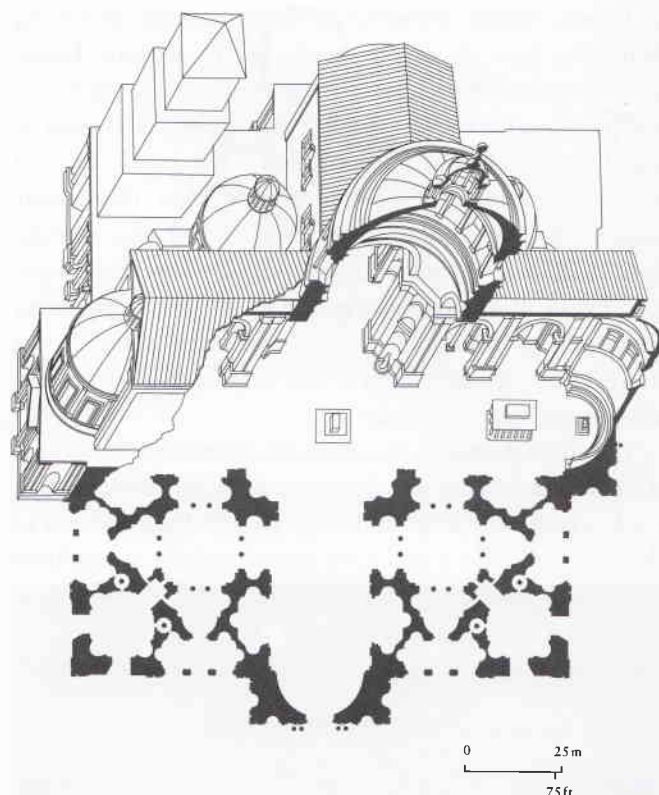
An observer entering at a principal portal would have looked straight through the building; the view from one of the entrances in front of the smaller domes, on the other hand, would have offered a complex succession of spaces. At one point Bramante apparently considered how his new structure would look if he could surround it with a huge piazza that responded to the forms of the great church in the center, a logical development from his proposed circular courtyard around the Tempietto.

Bramante started construction with one of the apses and the four piers to support the dome (fig. 17.13), which was located directly above the tomb of St. Peter. The use of the giant order below barrel vaults on the interior would have recalled Santa Maria presso San Satiro, but on a much grander scale. The church would have been crowned by a colossal dome on pendentives—not the more vertical, ribbed dome of the Tempietto, but the low, hemispherical dome of the Pantheon. It was to be elevated on a peristyle of columns on the exterior and a smaller columned gallery on the inside (fig. 17.14). With its horizontal elements, the hemispherical dome would have created an impression of masses at rest that contrasted with the soaring corner towers.

The area around the dome was built largely as Bramante planned it. By 1514 the seventy-year-old architect was able



17.11. BRAMANTE. Design of exterior, St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome, on bronze medal by Caradosso. 1506. Diameter 2¼" (5.7 cm; shown actual size). British Museum, London. Medal commissioned by Pope Julius II. For the front of this medal, with its portrait of Julius II, see fig. 17.2.
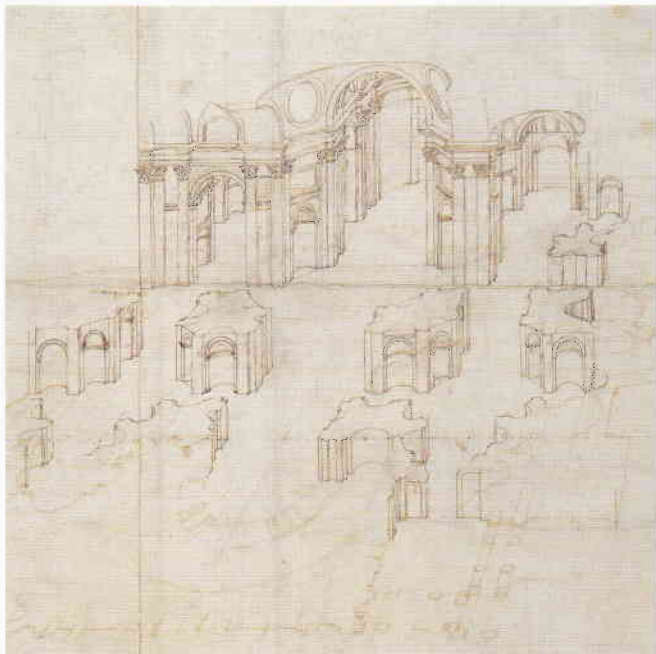
17.13. BRAMANTE. Drawing by BALDASSARE PERUZZI of a *Perspective Study, with Section and Plan, of St. Peter's* (partially embodying Bramante's second plan). Plan in sanguine, on paper; elevation in pen and ink; part straightedge and compass, part freehand, $21\frac{1}{4} \times 26\frac{3}{4}$" ($53.9 \times 67.8$ cm). Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.
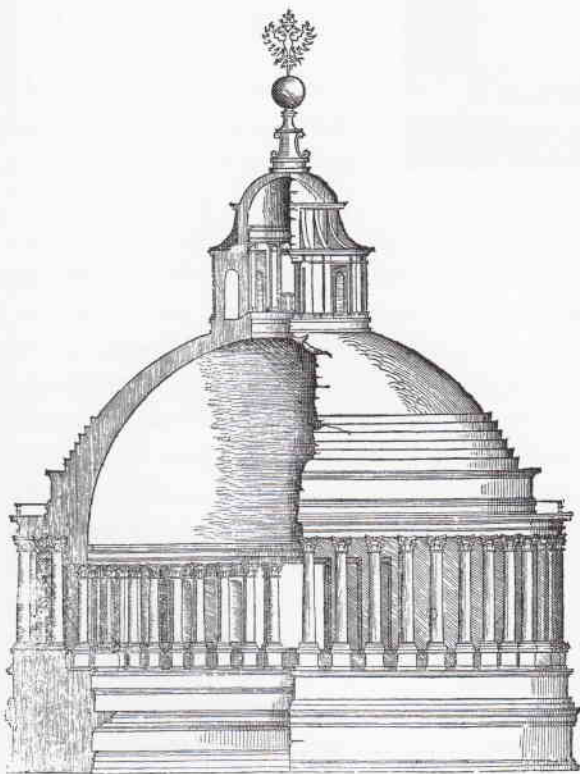


17.14. BRAMANTE. Design for elevation and section of dome, St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome. 1506 (from Sebastiano Serlio, *Il terzo libro d'architettura*, Venice, 1551).

to see the four arches of the crossing and the four pendentives, as well as the foundations of three of the arms of the cross and of some of the chapels (fig. 17.15). The four arches and piers are built on such a scale that they could not be changed and are clearly visible today, in spite of the later marble and gold ornament that covers them. Despite this impressive beginning, however, much of the nave of Old St. Peter's still stood, and a temporary construction sheltered the saint's tomb. Bramante's dome was not even begun, although, because the pendentives intended to support it were in place, its diameter was established.

Insight into the unity and harmony that Bramante intended for St. Peter's is offered by the pilgrimage church of Santa Maria della Consolazione at Todi, in Umbria (fig. 17.16). Begun in 1508, the church was long thought to have been based on a model by Bramante himself, although the only architect's name recorded is that of the otherwise obscure Cola da Caprarola. Four identical apses radiate from a central square, although there was apparently some question at first as to whether tradition might not demand a nave, as at Santa Maria del Calcinaio at
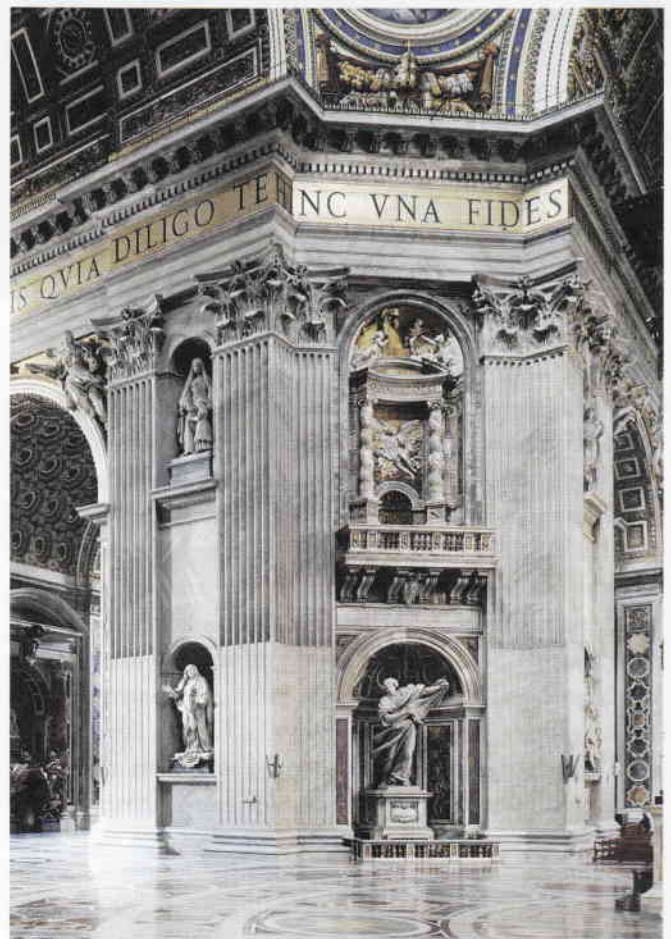


17.15. BRAMANTE, MICHELANGELO, and others. St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome, interior view at crossing.

17.16. COLA DA CAPRAROLA and others. Sta. Maria della Consolazione, Todi. Begun 1508.

Cortona (see fig. 14.11). The delicate treatment of the window frames, entablatures, and corner pilasters contrasts with the broad wall surfaces to create an effect of fragility and lightness unique among the centrally planned churches of the Renaissance. The Consolazione was not completed until the following century, and the entrance, balustrade, and dome show Roman taste of a later era. The verticality of the interior makes it difficult to photograph, but an effect of harmonious unity is created by the repeated rounded shapes of apses and half-domes that surround the central dome. The proportional relationships are defined by pilasters, entablatures, and other decorative elements in the ancient style.

Another vast project designed in 1505 by Bramante for Julius II, which, like St. Peter's, was left truncated at the architect's death, was the rebuilding of the papal palace. It was to be united to an earlier country house known as the Belvedere ("the beautiful view"), nearly 1,000 feet (300

meters) above St. Peter's at the top of a hill. The whole (now part of the Vatican Museums) was known as the Belvedere Palace. Bramante's proposal joined the palace and the pre-existing country house with long wings (fig. 17.17). These were to enclose an enormous area that would have become a formal garden with fountains, while staircases and ramps connected the levels; figure 17.17 provides some sense of this, although when it was made, around 1560, only the east side of the palace was complete. The walls were articulated with pilasters and entablatures in the Renaissance fashion, but alternating bays of the open loggia were recessed, so the pilasters appear more three-dimensional and the entablatures have a dynamic rhythm in space as they protrude and recede (fig. 17.18). Note the small niches, perhaps intended to receive sculptures, that flank the much larger openings into the loggia. At the top of the vista is a huge open apse; it was near this area that Julius exhibited the papal collection of ancient
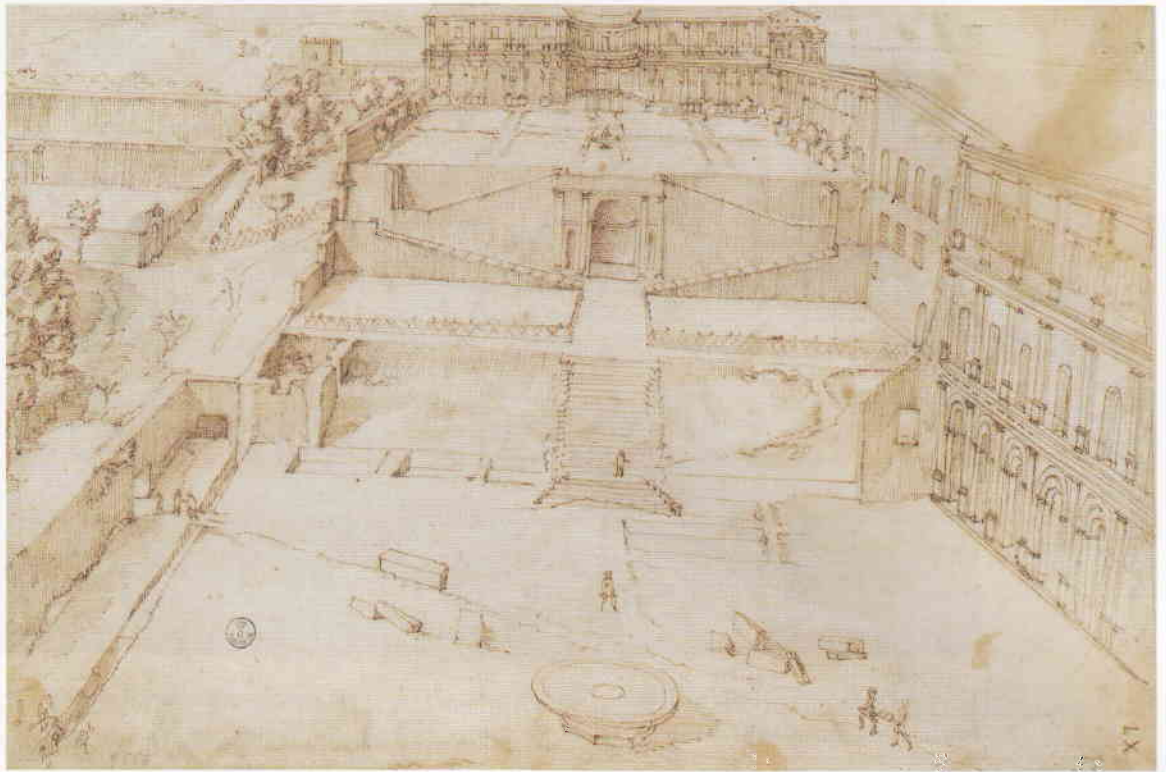
17.17. BRAMANTE. Belvedere, Vatican, Rome under construction, as seen from the papal palace in a drawing by G.A. Dosio. Construction begun 1505; this view c. 1558–61. Uffizi, Florence. Building commissioned by Pope Julius II.
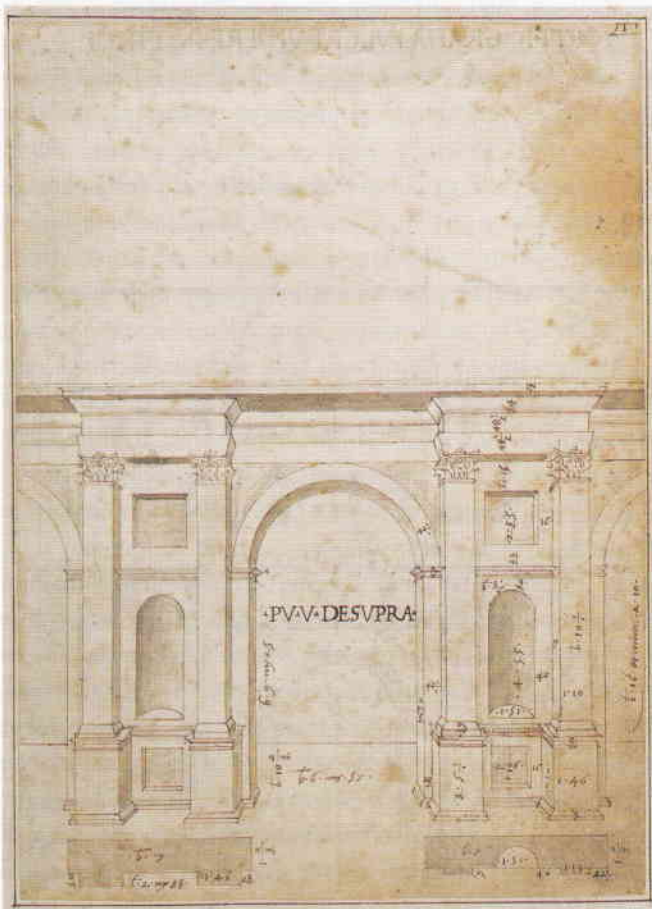
sculptures, which included the *Laocoön*, the *Belvedere Torso*, and the *Apollo Belvedere* (see figs. 17.3–17.4, 1.5). While the enormous barrel vaults of St. Peter's echo Alberti's Sant'Andrea (see fig. 10.9), the façades of the Belvedere reflect the Palazzo Rucellai (see fig. 10.5) and other Early Renaissance palazzi but with a vigorous new three-dimensionality. The scale of the scheme also transcends anything attempted in the Quattrocento. Together the pope and his architect, who read Dante to him in the evenings, envisioned a plan more extensive than that of any other palace built between the days of Emperor Hadrian and those of Louis XIV. Time was against them, and their vision was doomed to incompletion. Later, Bramante's palace suffered insensitive additions and the destruction of the vista by an arm connecting the two sides that seems to have been explicitly designed to ruin the continuous open garden envisioned by Julius and Bramante.



17.18. BRAMANTE (after design by). Elevation of bay of north side of the upper court of the Belvedere, as seen in a drawing from the Codex Coner. Sir John Soane's Museum, London.
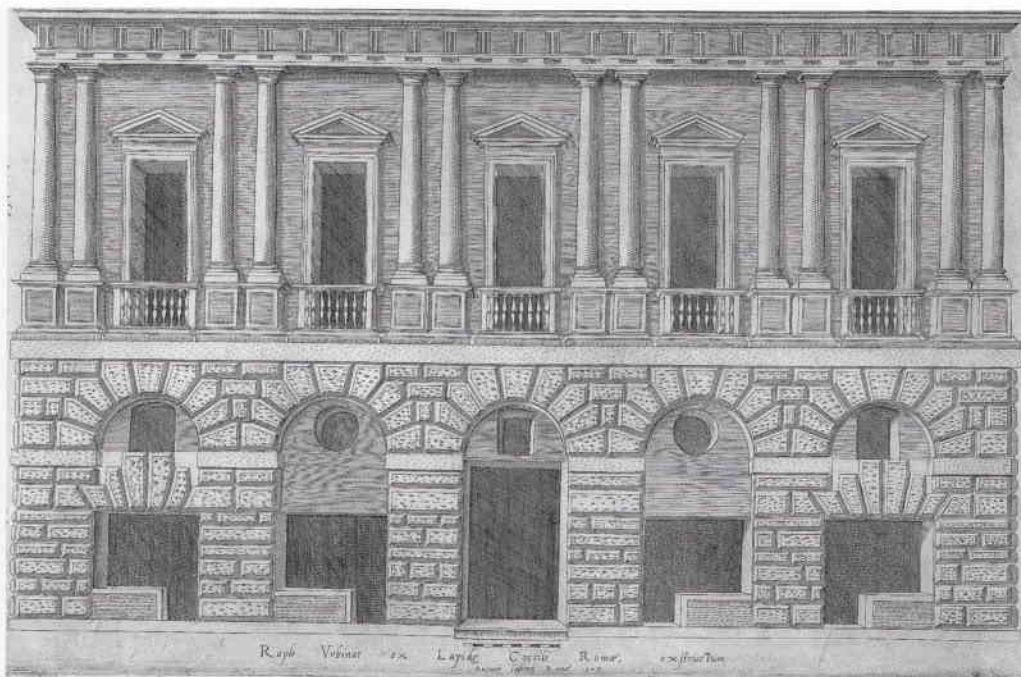
17.19. BRAMANTE. Palazzo Caprini, Rome, façade. c. 1510. Engraving by Antonio Lafreri, 1519. Building commissioned by Adriano Caprini.

Little remains of the other official buildings designed and in some cases built for the new Rome of Julius II. Although long since destroyed, Bramante's Palazzo Caprini (fig. 17.19)—also known as the House of Raphael because the artist bought it in 1517—cannot be ignored because it provided a model for the patrician town houses that replaced the popular three-story structure with its superimposed orders established by Alberti's Palazzo Rucellai. Bramante instead followed the Roman custom of devoting the ground floor to shops and setting above it a *piano nobile* destined for the owner. The Palazzo Caprini's heavily rusticated ground floor provided a base for engaged pairs of half-round columns, again on tall bases, that drew attention to the most important part of the palace. This design was so successful that it was repeated a number of times in Roman palaces and elsewhere.

## Michelangelo 1505 to 1516

In 1505, one year before Pope Julius II commissioned Bramante to rebuild St. Peter's, the pope called Michelangelo from Florence to design for him an enormous tomb, decorated with sculptures, to be placed in Old St. Peter's. We are not sure of its intended location in the old basilica, but it is possible that Julius wanted his tomb to confront that of Peter, the first pope. To carry out this commission, Michelangelo abandoned several undertakings in Florence, including the series of sculptures of apostles for the

Duomo and the fresco of the *Battle of Cascina* (see figs. 16.41–16.43). Today we have only verbal accounts written down much later and a few drawings with which to reconstruct the three-story mausoleum first conceived by Julius and Michelangelo. Scholars generally agree on the following: Michelangelo made a number of preliminary designs, and the one selected by the pope called for a free-standing structure with an oval burial chamber for the sarcophagus; the lower story of the exterior was decorated with niches containing statues of Victories flanked by herms, to which would be attached bound and struggling male Captives; there were to be at least eight Victories and sixteen Captives—one reconstruction calls for ten Victories and twenty Captives; on the second story, the plan called for statues of Moses, St. Paul, the Active Life, and the Contemplative Life.

The principal dispute arises over the appearance of the top story. Vasari wrote:

> The work rose above the cornice in diminishing steps, with a frieze of scenes in bronze, and with other figures and *putti* and ornaments in turn; and above there were finally two figures, of which one was the Heavens, who smiling held on his shoulder a bier together with Cybele, goddess of the earth, who seemed that she was grieving that she must remain in a world deprived of every virtue by the death of this man; and the Heavens appeared to be smiling that his soul had passed to celestial glory.
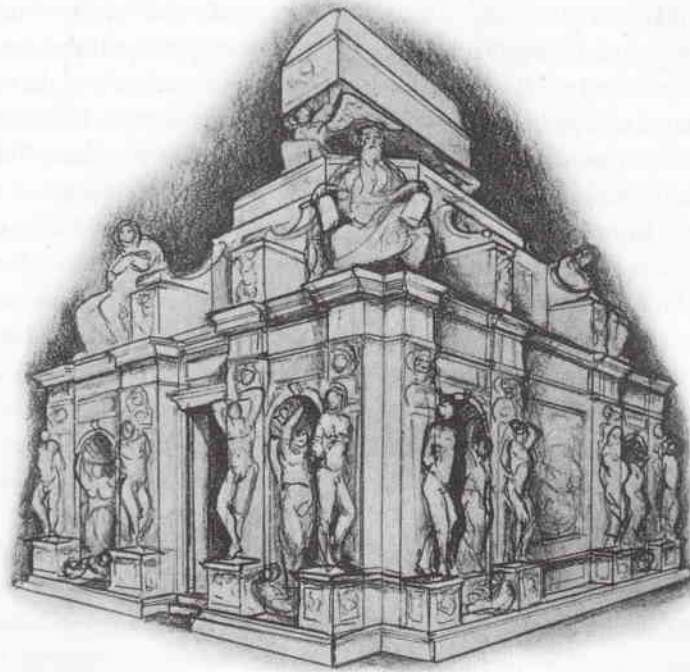
17.20. MICHELANGELO. Tomb of Pope Julius II, proposed reconstruction of project of 1505. The size of the base of this first proposal was said to be 36 × 24' (11 × 7.3 m). Commissioned by Pope Julius II for Old St. Peter's, Rome.

No text mentions a statue of the pope, but some scholars have proposed that the bier supported his effigy. One claims that the pope was recumbent (which would have made him almost invisible from the floor). Another points out that the explicit word Vasari uses for bier really meant the *sella gestatoria*, or portable papal throne, hence Julius II would have been shown carried into the next world, blessing as he went. Documents tell us that a marble block intended for the papal effigy was delivered to Rome. Given that Vasari did not mention such a figure, the most probable solution is that Julius would have been represented lying on the sarcophagus within the burial chamber. A suggested reconstruction of the 1505 design, culminating in a bier that follows Vasari's description, is offered here (fig. 17.20).

After Michelangelo had spent a year transporting marble blocks from Carrara and had started carving, the pope interrupted the commission. Although Michelangelo told his version of this episode several times, each time with richer and more picturesque detail, it is still not clear why work was stopped. Presumably funds had to be diverted to the rebuilding of St. Peter's by Bramante. In any case, the pressure to finish the tomb became a nightmare for the artist during the following forty years. The original design was the first instance when Michelangelo combined figures and architecture and it became the germ of his major pictorial work, the Sistine Ceiling. Here elements designed for the 1505 version of the tomb came to fruition,

while the ceiling in turn acted as a crucible for new sculptural ideas utilized in later versions of the tomb.

Of the architecture and the more than forty over-life-sized statues intended for the tomb, Michelangelo had completed only the niches with their rich decorations before he left in anger for Florence in 1506. There is evidence, however, that the poses of the two *Captives* now in the Louvre (see figs. 17.42–17.43) and the *Moses* (see fig. 17.41) were determined and blocked out at this time.

Although Julius had already envisioned inviting Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, instead he marched to Bologna in 1506, recaptured the city, and from there requested that the outflanked Florentines send Michelangelo to him. The sculptor spent the next eighteen months in Bologna modeling and casting a colossal bronze portrait of the pope. The finished work survived for a little more than three years before antipapal forces, again in control of Bologna, pushed it from its pedestal on the façade of San Petronio, melted it down, and cast the bronze into a cannon, mockingly called "La Giulia," a feminine version of Julius's name. The specific purpose of this cannon, it was said, was to fire at the backside of the fleeing pope should he once again attempt to capture Bologna. The life of Michelangelo's colossal statue was so short and its subject so despised by the Bolognese that no drawing is known and we have only modest indirect evidence as to its appearance. Perhaps some of its grandeur is embodied in one or more of the prophets of the Sistine Ceiling.

THE SISTINE CHAPEL. Michelangelo had scarcely arrived back in Florence in the spring of 1508 when he was called again to Rome, the idea of painting a figural program on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel having become a definite commission. At this time, of course, the chapel might have been considered already fully decorated: the program of Sixtus IV had included scenes from the lives of Moses and of Christ and images of popes at the window level (fig. 17.1; see figs. 13.19, 14.16–14.17), while the vault had been painted with the traditional blue with gold stars (see fig. 3.1). According to Michelangelo's own later account, the pope proposed that he paint figures of the twelve apostles around the edge of the vault, one in each of the spandrels between the arches. The central part of the ceiling was to be filled by "ornaments according to custom"— apparently a network of geometric and decorative patterns (fig. 17.21).

Michelangelo objected that the design would be "a poor thing." "Why?" asked the pope. "Because [the apostles] were poor too," replied Michelangelo. And then, still according to the artist's own version (written much later, at a time when he was threatened with lawsuits over the tomb), the pope told him he could paint anything he liked. There is no reason to doubt that Michelangelo's dissatisfaction with the subject prompted the expansion of the program; perhaps he felt that twelve large figures offered little intellectual and spiritual challenge. Nevertheless, it is hard to accept that Julius would have entrusted a complex theological program at the center of Western Christendom to an artist who, in all probability, could not read Latin. The cycle that eventually filled the ceiling is, visually and theologically, the most complex of all Renaissance fresco cycles (figs. 17.22–17.23). Julius and Michelangelo were most likely advised by Marco Vigerio della Rovere, the pope's fellow Franciscan and first cousin once removed, whom Julius had elevated to cardinal in 1503 and whose *Christian Decachord* was published in Rome in 1507 and dedicated to the pope.

At this point, the twelve apostles gave way to Old Testament prophets and sibyls from antiquity. They are seated on thrones framed by pairs of *putti*, painted to resemble marble sculpture, who support a painted cornice that in turn supports benches on which nude youths are seated. The youths hold painted lengths of cloth from which are suspended what seem to be bronze medallions with figural scenes. The continuous cornice frames a central narrative spine of nine scenes from Genesis, alternately large and small, which fill the center of the ceiling. At certain points, the cornice seems to be supported by rams' skulls—an ancient Roman decorative motif—flanked by bronze-colored nude figures. In the four corners, triangular spandrels contain more Old Testament scenes (also visible in
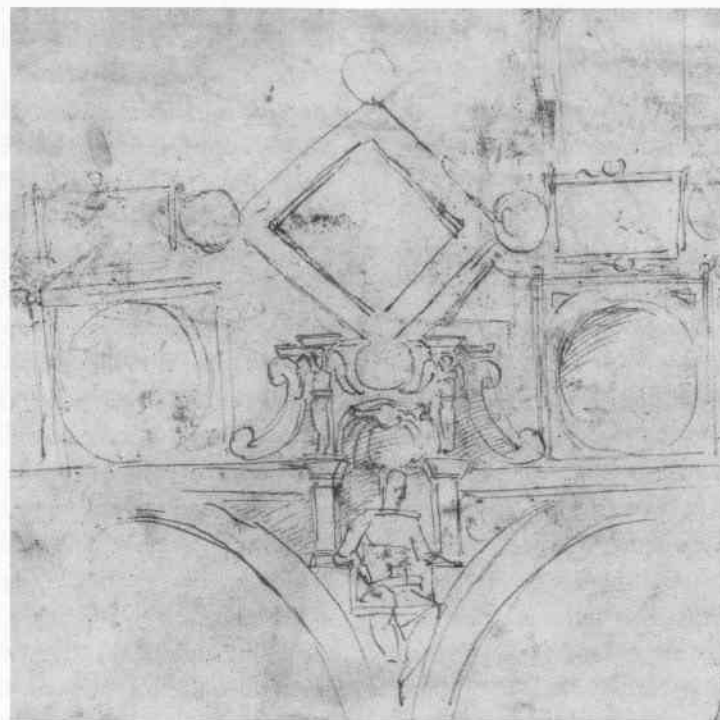


17.21. MICHELANGELO. Study for Sistine Ceiling (portion of sheet).
c. 1508. Ink and black chalk, size of detail shown approx. 12 × 12"
(27.5 × 27.5 cm). British Museum, London.

fig. 17.23). Above the windows are lunettes and small spandrels that contain figures representing the generations of the ancestry of Christ. Michelangelo had to destroy two of these lunettes, Perugino's frescoed altarpiece, and two scenes from the earlier cycle (see fig. 14.18) when he painted his *Last Judgment* on the altar wall (see fig. 20.1).

To read all the various elements correctly, a viewer must face each of the four walls in turn, and in order to read the narrative scenes right side up, we must start at the entrance and move toward the altar. This means that the narrative sequence must be read backward, starting with the story of Noah, which is immediately overhead when we enter the chapel, and culminating over the altar with the beginning of the creation story in which God divides light from darkness. This unusual approach inverts the narrative in time and is a crucial clue to understanding the chapel's iconography.

The meaning of the ceiling as a whole has been the subject of controversy. Before we turn to this issue, it is important to remember that the chapel was already decorated with the parallel lives of Moses and Christ and representations of historic popes. These cycles encompassed the Old and New Testaments and papal history; even the apostles, the first suggestion for the ceiling's iconography, were present because of their roles in the life of Christ.

The notion of placing enthroned figures on the ceiling can be related to earlier chapel decoration; note, for example, the four sibyls in the vault of Ghirlandaio's Sassetti Chapel (see fig. 13.1). The substitution of prophets and sibyls for the apostles probably resulted from the decision to devote the central area to scenes taken from the Flood and Creation episodes described in Genesis.

Michelangelo's role in the evolution of the chapel's iconography is uncertain, nor do we have any idea how this deeply thoughtful man of serious convictions may have related his personal ideas to the agenda of Pope Julius II and the involvement of the pope's theological advisors, including Marco Vigerio della Rovere and the papal retinue. Who made the decision to dedicate the spine of the chapel to the Genesis scenes will remain a mystery unless further documentation is discovered; even that would not recover the discussions and debate that must have led to the result that we see today. Whatever the process, it should be clear that the Flood and Creation scenes were not chosen simply because they were biblical scenes not previously included in the chapel. If that were the case, the normal sequence would have been sufficient. The inversion of the normal sequence suggests that we need to look for an additional level of meaning.

The interpretation of Michelangelo's poetry is as debated as the meaning of the ceiling, but it is clear that the ceiling's themes explore issues also important in his poetry:

God's creation of humanity, notions of beauty, and how human sin interferes with the individual's personal relationship to God. God's creation is the main subject of the ceiling, while the beauty of his creation is evident in the idealized nudes that populate the scenes and decorate the enframement. In terms of human sinfulness, the cycle starts with the drunkenness of Noah, the sin of the one man God felt was worth saving from his wrathful flood. As we read the Genesis scenes backward through time and approach the altar where the Mass is performed, we pass through the sin of Adam and Eve (see fig. 17.29) to scenes that emphasize God's titanic power as he creates humanity and the earth as a setting for human life. The cycle culminates with the scene that marks the beginning of the biblical Creation: God making light in darkness. The metaphor of enlightenment is basic to this scene, which is located over the altar where, in Christian tradition, the ritual of the Mass reunites repentant humanity with God.

According to a basic principle of Christian theology, prophets and sibyls understood how Old Testament events like those shown on the spine of the ceiling predicted the New Testament coming of Christ. For this reason the ancestors of Christ represent the physical origins of what the prophets and sibyls understand will be humanity's spiritual destiny. Another level of symbolism is provided by the garlands of oak leaves and acorns held by a number of the nudes. Rovere, the family name of Sixtus IV and Julius II, means "oak." The oak tree of the family arms had also been prominent in the Quattrocento decorations on the side walls.

In 1508 Michelangelo set to work quickly, producing the hundreds of preliminary drawings that had to be made before large cartoons could be started. A few of the drawings survive, suggesting the labor that went into every detail, but the cartoons have perished. They were laid against the moist *intonaco*, temporarily nailed into place, and their outlines incised into the surface with a stylus or transferred using the *spolvero* technique. The stylus marks in the plaster, which can still be seen in some photographs (see fig. 17.33), document Michelangelo's working method. He designed a new kind of scaffolding, supported by beams projecting from holes in the walls, which brought him to the proper level without support from either ceiling or floor. The scaffolding was arched like the vault and, except for infrequent removal so that the work could be seen from the floor, was in place for the entire four and a half years of his undertaking, permitting the artist to walk about as he wished and to paint from a standing position—not lying down, as is still popularly believed. In a drawing he shows himself painting the ceiling standing up, and in the accompanying sonnet, quoted in the caption to fig. 17.24, he described at length

*Right:* 17.22. Iconographic diagram of the Sistine Chapel.
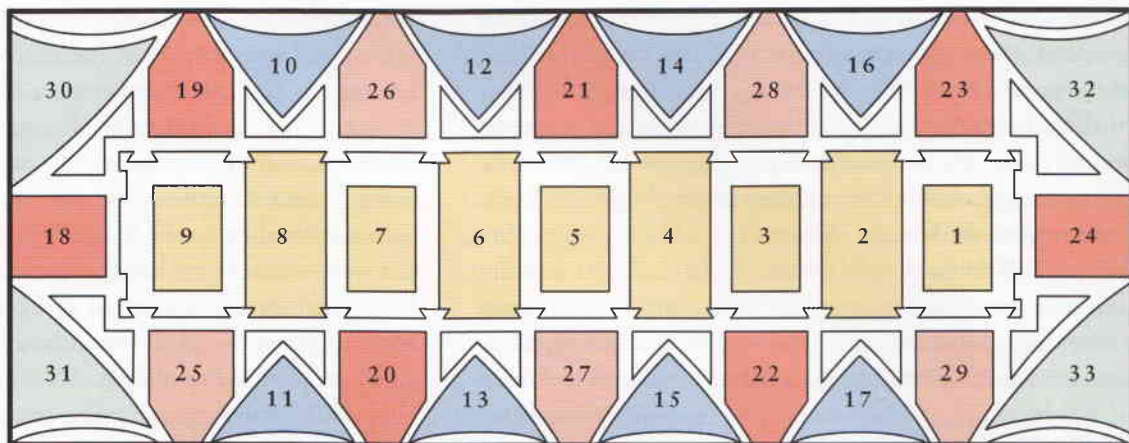
**Key to Ceiling Panels**

GENESIS
1 *Drunkenness of Noah.*
2 *Deluge* (figs. 17.25–17.26).
3 *Sacrifice of Noah.*
4 *Fall of Adam and Eve, Expulsion* (fig. 17.29).
5 *Creation of Eve* (fig. 17.31).
6 *Creation of Adam* (fig. 17.32).
7 *Separating Waters from Land.*
8 *Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Plants* (fig. 17.34).
9 *Separation of Light from Darkness* (fig. 17.35).

ANCESTORS OF CHRIST
10 *Solomon with his Mother.*
11 *Parents of Jesse.*
12 *Rehoboam with Mother.*
13 *Asa with Parents.*
14 *Uzziah with Parents.*
15 *Hezekiah with Parents.*
16 *Zerubbabel with Parents.*
17 *Josiah with Parents.*

PROPHETS
18 *Jonah.*
19 *Jeremiah.*
20 *Daniel.*
21 *Ezekial.*
22 *Isaiah* (figs. 17.27–17.28).
23 *Joel.*
24 *Zechariah.*

SIBYLS
25 *Libyan Sibyl* (fig. 17.36).
26 *Persian Sibyl.*
27 *Cumaean Sibyl* (fig. 17.30).
28 *Erythrean Sibyl.*
29 *Delphic Sibyl.*

OLD TESTAMENT SCENES OF SALVATION
30 *Punishment of Haman.*
31 *Worship of the Brazen Serpent* (fig. 17.39).
32 *David Beheading Goliath* (fig. 17.38).
33 *Judith and Holofernes.*



17.23. MICHELANGELO. Sistine Ceiling frescoes, Vatican, Rome. 1508–12. 45 × 128' (13.75 × 39 m). Commissioned by Pope Julius II. It is estimated that Michelangelo's paintings cover almost 6,000 square feet (550 square meters) of the surfaces of the ceiling and upper side walls.
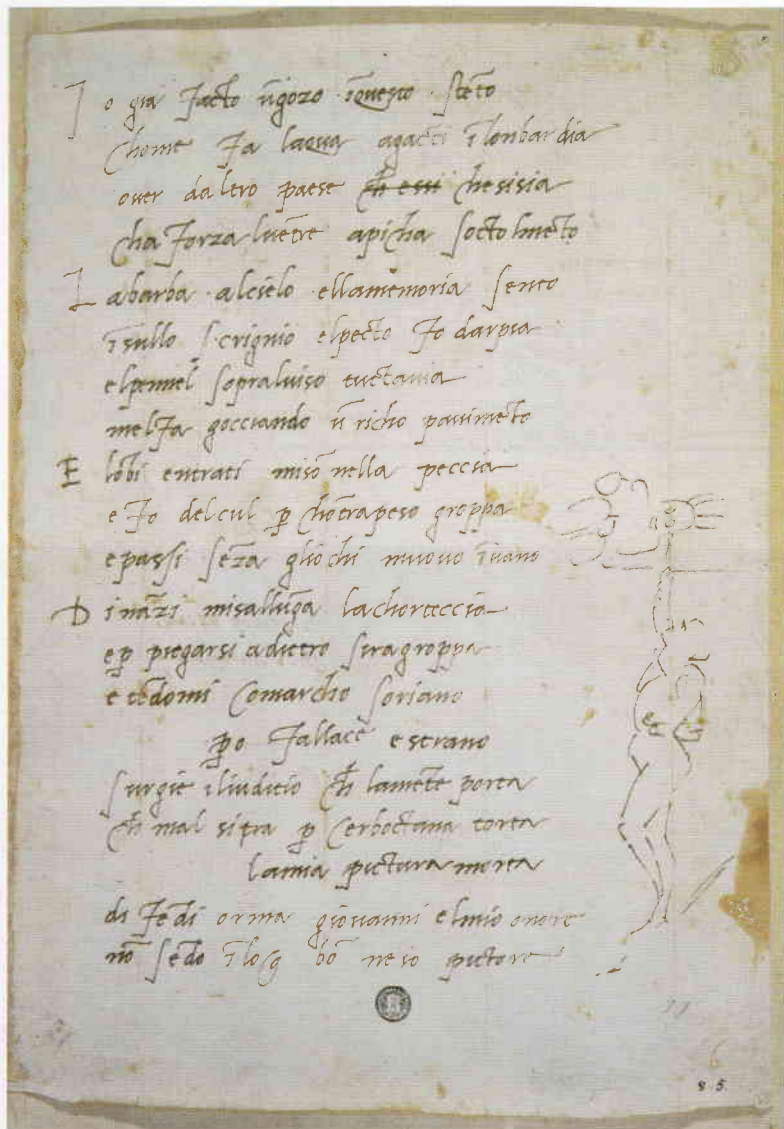
17.24. MICHELANGELO. Sonnet with a representation of the artist standing, painting a figure on the ceiling over his head. c. 1510. Pen and ink, 11 × 7" (28 × 17.8 cm). Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

The text on the drawing reads:

I've got myself a goiter from this strain....
My beard toward Heaven, I feel the back of my brain
Upon my neck, I grow the breast of a Harpy;
My brush, above my face continually,
Makes it a splendid floor by dripping down....
Pointless the unseeing steps I go.
In front of me, my skin is being stretched
While it folds up behind and forms a knot,
And I am bending like a Syrian bow.

the physical discomfort he experienced while painting. By September 1508, Michelangelo was already painting, and by January 1509 he was already in difficulties. Apparently he did not know enough about the recipe for *intonaco*, and the *Deluge* became moldy and had to be scraped off and redone.

The course of his work paralleled dramatic events in the pontificate of Julius II. When Michelangelo ran out of money, which happened twice, he had to go to Bologna and beg from the pope, who was in a crucial phase of his war with France. At the time of the second trip, in December 1510, the pope had already grown the beard that gives him such a prophetic appearance in his late portraits. Perhaps Michelangelo was moved by the spectacle of the old man's heroism and his vision of an Italian peninsula unified under the papacy. Whatever the source of inspiration, he seems to have become more personally engaged as the work proceeded.

The first section of the ceiling to be undertaken—the Noah scenes, flanking prophets and sibyls, and the scenes of David and Judith in the corner spandrels—is relatively timid in handling. The *Deluge* (fig. 17.25), first of the larger scenes, is like the *Battle of Cascina* (see fig. 16.42) in its carefully drawn figures composed into what seem to be sculptural groups. Only two rocks remain above the rising waters, and groups of men, women, and children struggle to save themselves while the ark is shown receding into the distance. One of the most moving details is the father who carries the body of his drowned son (fig. 17.26). Michelangelo's precision extends even to the representation of benches and pots in the midst of this cosmic disaster.

One of the first prophets to be painted was *Isaiah* (figs. 17.27–17.28), who seems relatively youthful and energetic despite his gray hair and a face ravaged by disturbing thoughts. Deep in meditation, he closes his book and turns
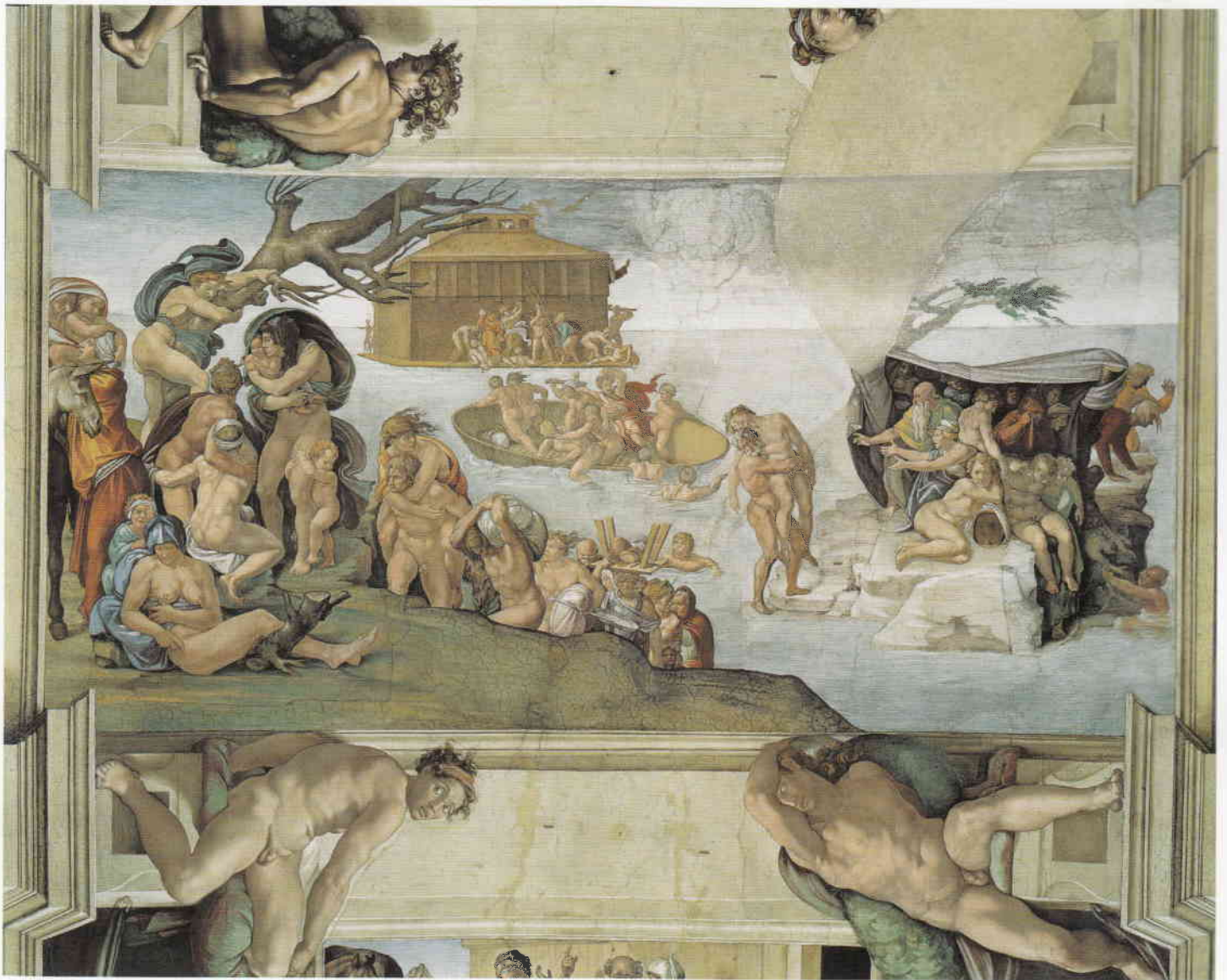
17.25. MICHELANGELO. *Deluge.* 1509. Fresco, 9'2" × 18'8"
(2.8 × 5.7 m). Sistine Ceiling.
Twenty-nine *giornate* patches indicate that this fresco was painted
in twenty-nine days; the total number of *giornate* patches for the
ceiling as a whole is 582.

in a majestic movement. He seems about to drop his left
hand—on which his head had apparently been propped—
as he listens to one of his accompanying *putti* (each of the
prophets and sibyls has two attendant *putti* who exhort or
inspire them). He turns away from the *Deluge,* which is
above and to his left, as if in answer to God's promise to
him: "For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should
no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would
not be angry with thee" (Isaiah 54:9).

As he worked on this first section, Michelangelo appar-
ently realized that greater boldness was demanded, for
even within the first section (in the right third of figure
17.23), his figures become somewhat larger and broader.



17.26.
Detail of
fig. 17.25.

17.27. MICHELANGELO. *Prophet Isaiah*. 1509–10. Fresco. Sistine Ceiling.

The sibyls and prophets were each completed in about fifteen days.

*Below:* 17.28. Detail of fig. 17.27.



After the first section was completed in September 1510, the planks of the scaffolding were removed, and Michelangelo had his first chance to see how his figures looked from the floor. His response was immediate, and the figures in the second section are dramatically increased in scale.

The Temptation and Expulsion had previously been depicted separately (see figs. 8.12–8.13), but Michelangelo united them (fig. 17.29) with a tree that echoes the shape of the Della Rovere oak from the pope's coat of arms. In Michelangelo's composition, the crime leads to its punishment, and the tempting Satan and avenging angel are intertwined with the tree's branches. Vigerio described the Temptation as an antitype or opposite of the Last Supper, suggesting that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was the opposite of the Eucharist, fruit of the Tree of Life. He explained how Adam "turned his eyes from the morning light which is God, and gave himself over to the fickle and dark desires of woman," which is what seems to be happening in the fresco.

Here, for the first time in the ceiling frescoes, Michelangelo's figures fill the foreground space and are on the same scale as the surrounding nudes. The expressive depth has also increased; in no earlier figure on the ceiling do we find

a face that approaches the anguished intensity of the expelled Adam. The right half of the scene seems to have been inspired by the *Expulsions* of Masaccio and Jacopo della Quercia (see figs. 8.13, 7.24), but now these Early Renaissance compositions are transformed by High Renaissance grandeur.

The *Cumaean Sibyl* (fig. 17.30), immensely old and yet still incredibly muscular, turns her wrinkled face toward the altar. She reads a book, and her attendants hold another. In her youth, when she was beautiful, she was loved by the ancient god Apollo, who offered to grant her as many years as the grains of sand she held in her hand; when she refused his love and his offer, he doomed her to look her age. Because it was believed that her writings were preserved on the Capitoline Hill, she was held to symbolize the age and strength of the Roman Church. Her attendants look calmly and gently down on her aged face and herculean left arm, which foreshadows the powerfully muscled arm of Michelangelo's *Moses* (see fig. 17.41).

Michelangelo placed the *Cumaean Sibyl* next to the scene showing the creation of Eve from Adam's side (fig. 17.31), which Vigerio, following long tradition, compared
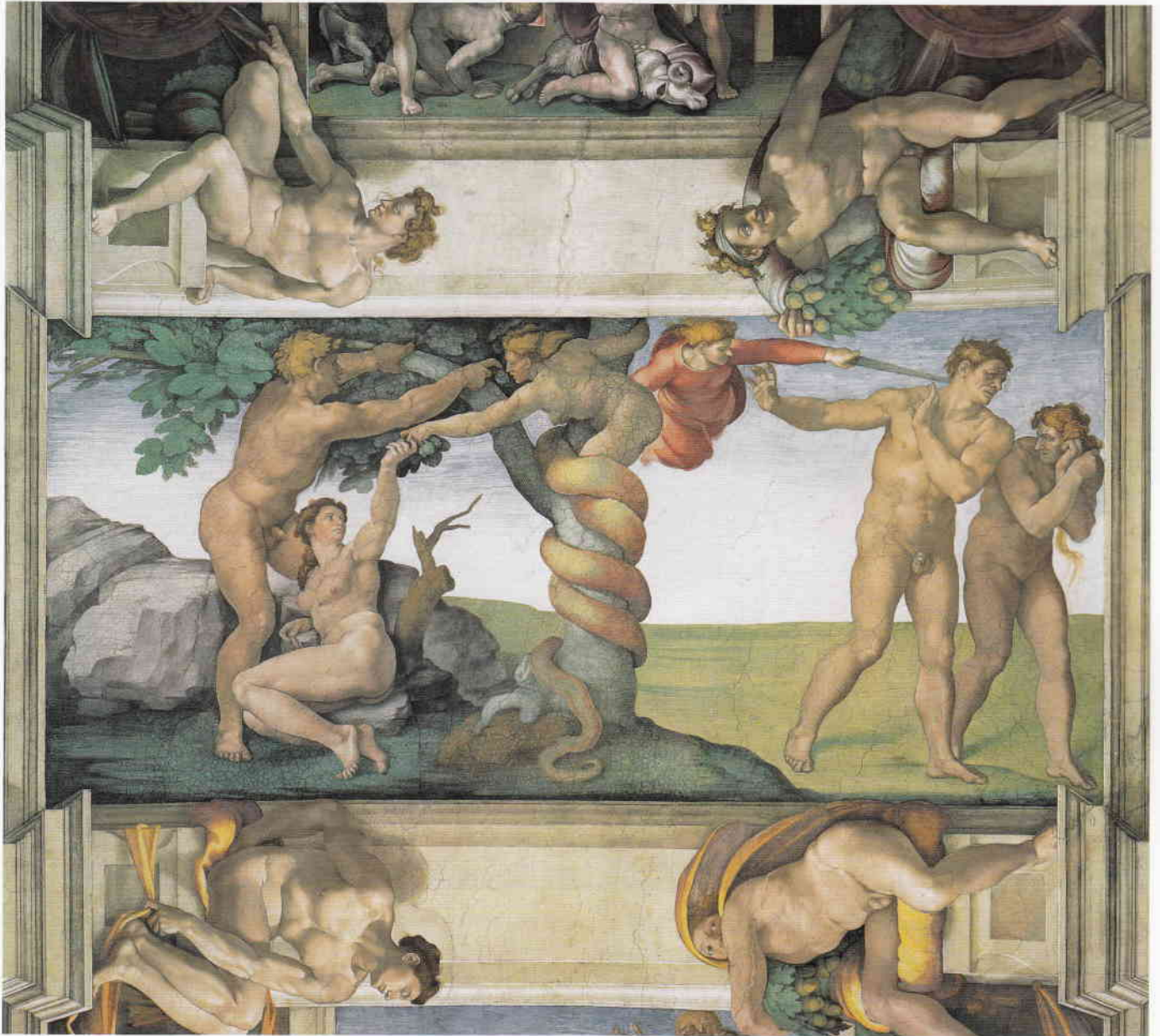
**17.29. MICHELANGELO.** *Fall of Adam and Eve* and *Expulsion*. 1510–11. Fresco, 9'2" × 18'8" (2.8 × 5.7 m). Sistine Ceiling.
The fresco was completed in thirteen days.

to the creation of the Church from the side of Christ. God, who appears here for the first time in the Sistine Ceiling, stands on the ground, his mantle wrapped about him. The massive volumes of Michelangelo's figures in this scene recall Masaccio's in their bulk and in their freely painted surfaces.

It appears that the two scenes with Adam and Eve and their attendant prophet and sibyl date between the autumn of 1510 and the return of the pope to Rome the following summer, his armies routed, and the city awaiting a French attack that never materialized. On August 14, 1511, the eve of the Assumption of the Virgin, the pope attended the first Mass in the chapel after the planking had been

removed for the second time. Our discussion of Michelangelo's figure of *St. Matthew* (see pp. 477–78) emphasized the artist's need to be satisfied with the expression of a work at each step in its development; when Michelangelo saw his ceiling decoration from the floor when it was two-thirds complete, he apparently decided that he needed to change direction once again.

He may also have been inspired by the successes of Julius's army as he worked on the final section, and the revival of papal hopes. In any case, both form and spirit are transformed. The first thing we notice is another increase in the scale of the figures. The prophets and sibyls, who have empty space around them in the first section of

17.30. MICHELANGELO. *Cumaean Sibyl.*
1510. Fresco. Sistine Ceiling.



*Below:* 17.31. MICHELANGELO. *Creation of Eve.* 1510–11. Fresco, 5'7" × 8'6½" (1.7 × 2.6 m). Sistine Ceiling. This scene was completed in twenty-two days.
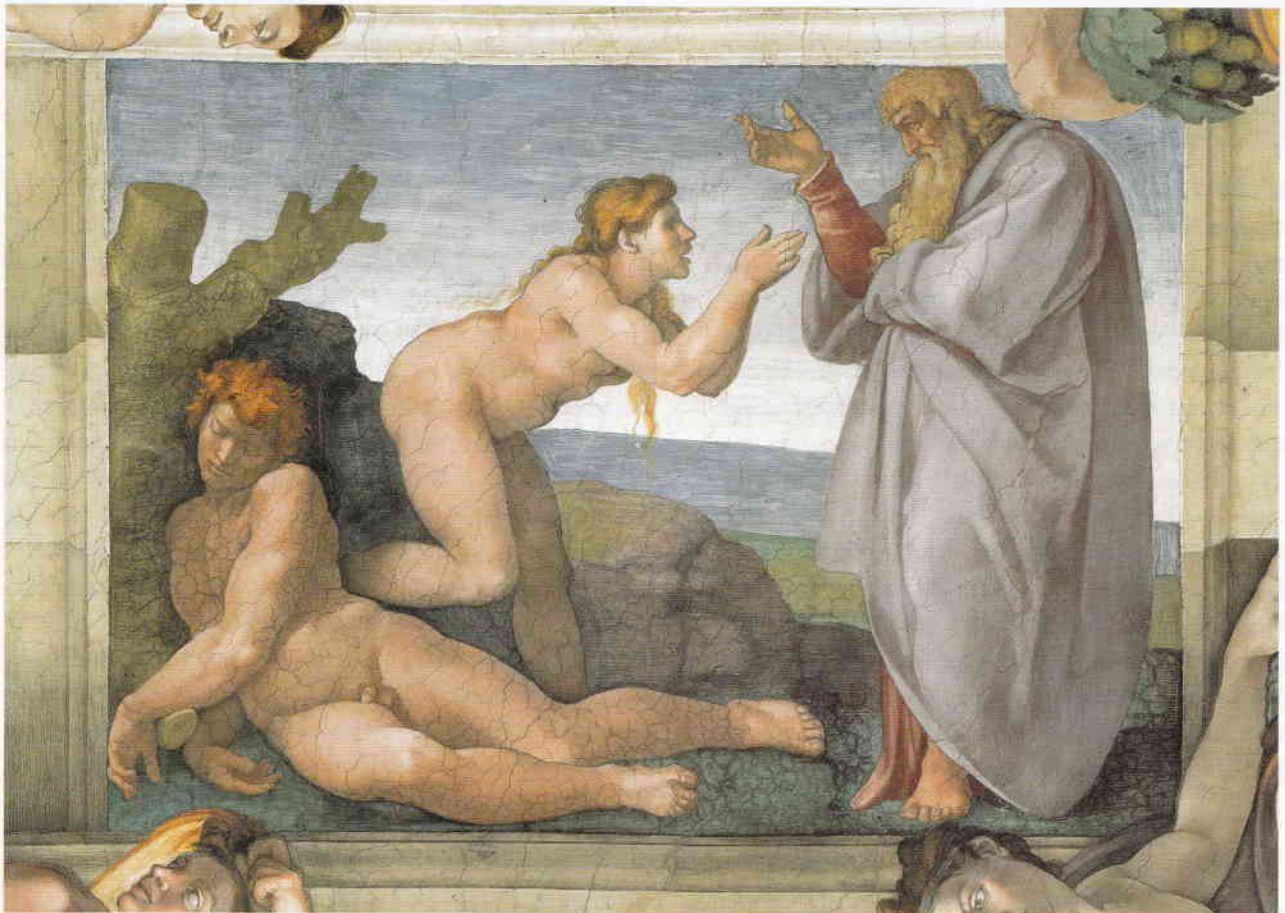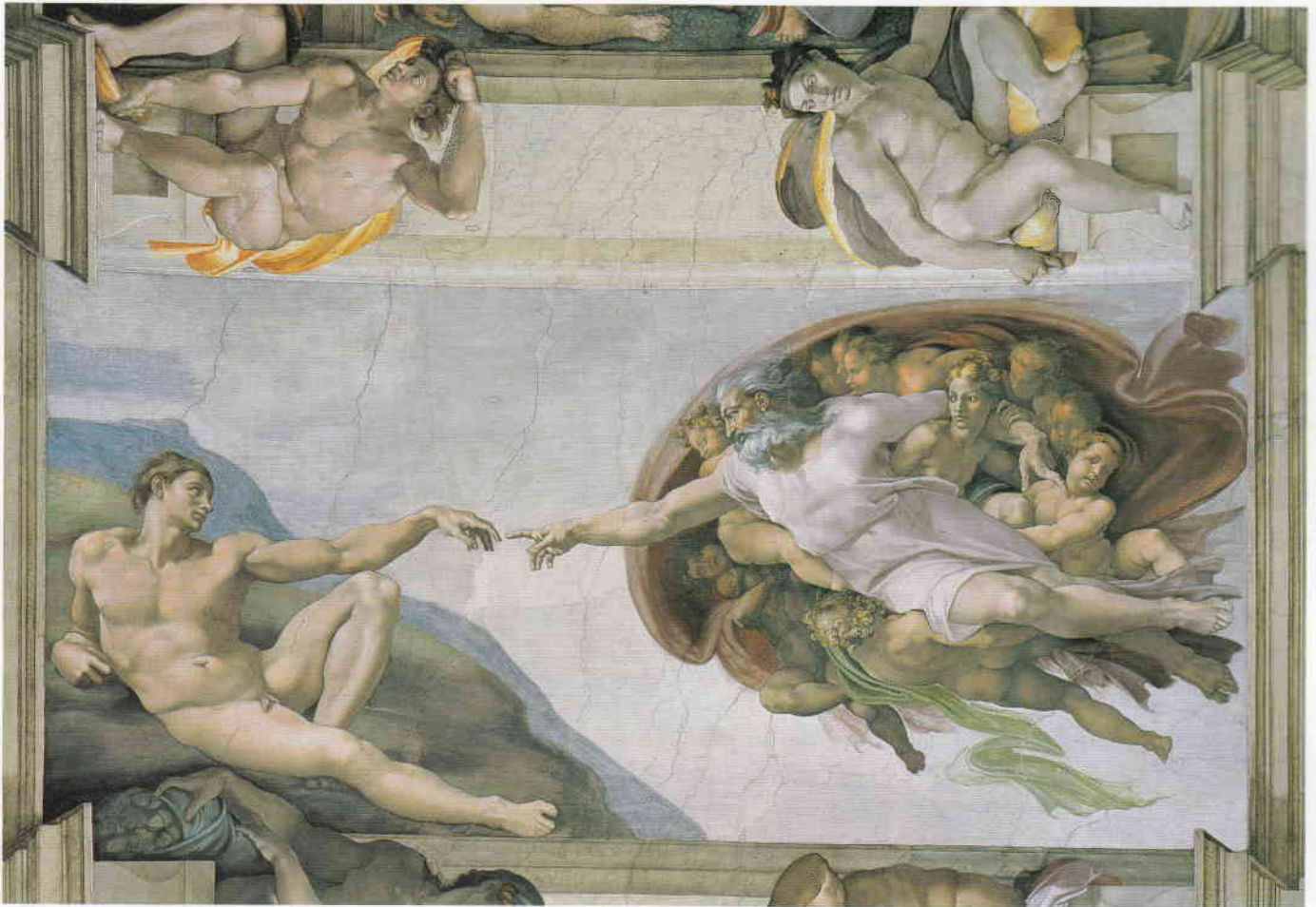
17.32. MICHELANGELO. *Creation of Adam*. 1511–12. Fresco, 9'2" × 18'8" (2.8 × 5.7 m). Sistine Ceiling. *Giornate* reveal that this fresco was completed in approximately seventeen days.

the ceiling and fill their thrones in the second, now overflow them. The footstools are lower and the surrounding ornament gives way before these figures, who are nearly half again as large as their predecessors. In the narrative scenes, fewer, more colossal figures move within frames that are now too small to hold them. God himself, who was absent from the first four scenes and who stood on the earth in the Creation of Eve, moves dramatically through the heavens in the last four scenes.

Of all the images that crowd the ceiling, the *Creation of Adam* (fig. 17.32) has most deeply impressed posterity. Here we are given a vision that expresses both the majesty of God and the nobility of humanity. Borne aloft, his mantle bursting with wingless angels, God is represented moving before us, his calm gaze accompanying and reinforcing the movement of his arm (fig. 17.33). He extends his forefinger, about to touch that of Adam, whose name means "earth" and who reclines on the barren ground, his arm supported on his knee. While the divine form is convex and explosive, the human is concave, receptive, and conspicuously impotent. All the pomp seen in



17.33. Detail of fig. 17.32.

17.34. MICHELANGELO. *Creation of Sun, Moon, and Plants.* 1511–12. Fresco, 9'2" × 18'8" (2.8 × 5.7 m). Sistine Ceiling. This large scene was completed in seven days.

traditional representations of the Almighty has vanished, and God is garbed in a short tunic that reveals the strength of his body. Even Michelangelo's precise depiction of veins, wrinkles, and gray hair cannot reduce the power radiated by this celestial apparition. Love and longing seem to stream from the face of Adam toward the Omnipotent, who is about to give him life, strength, and responsibility. The beauty of God's creation is evident in the nobility of his proportions and in the pulsing forms and flowing contours. A century of Early Renaissance research into the nature of human anatomy seems in retrospect to lead to this single moment, in which all the pride of antiquity in the glory of the body and all the yearning of Christianity for the spirit have reached a mysterious and perfect harmony.

The contact about to take place between the two index fingers has been described as a current, a not inappropriate electrical metaphor given the period's knowledge of what we today call "static electricity." The river of celestial life surrounding God seems ready to flow into the waiting body of Adam.

An explanation of the content of the *Creation of Adam* may lie in the third and fourth stanzas of the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus" ("Come, Holy Spirit"), which was sung before each vote when the Sistine Chapel was used for the conclave to elect a new pope:

Thou, sevenfold in thy gifts,
Finger of the paternal right hand,
Thou, duly promised of the Father

Enriching our throats with the word,
Let thy light inflame our senses,
Pour thy love into our hearts,
Strengthen us infirm of body
Forever with thy manly vigor.

Divine guidance, then, explains not only the outpouring of love into the heart of Adam but also the impotence of his body until the Lord fills it with "manly vigor." Frederick Hartt even suggested that the Della Rovere acorns (*glandes*) should be related to the genitals of the nudes. In High Renaissance Rome such explicit symbolism was considered neither indecent nor irreverent, in contrast to the Florence of Piero Soderini, which had required that the genitals of Michelangelo's *David* be covered (see p. 477).

While it is likely that the pose of Adam was inspired by ancient figures of river gods, the drawings from the model that survive for this figure show that the powerful idealism was derived from Michelangelo's own imagination. Muscles that in the live model were awkward have been transfigured in the fresco by the force that flows through them as well as by the rhythm of the lines, which relates the profiles on opposite sides of a single limb like the intertwined themes in a polyphonic musical composition.

The final large scene depicts the *Creation of Sun, Moon, and Plants* (fig. 17.34). In a simple gesture, the Lord, sweeping through the heavens attended by angels, propels the sun from one hand and, apparently simultaneously, the moon from the other. According to the account in Genesis, this event occurred on the fourth day. At the left Michelan-

gelo shows the Lord from the back, stretching forth his hand on the third day to draw plant life from the earth. In one interpretation of the ceiling, a scholar has called attention to St. Augustine's quotation of the words of the Lord to Moses: "While my glory passeth by ... thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:22–23).

After the relative restraint of the preceding scenes, the violent movement here comes as a shock. On the right the Lord hurtles toward us, then turns as swiftly to move away. His fierce expression and powerful movement raise his image to a new plane of grandeur. The sun and moon are whirling out of the space of the picture. Many of the forms are dramatically foreshortened; Vasari expressed his wonder at how the Lord's right arm could be inscribed within a square and still seem completely projected in depth. And the figures are so huge that, if brought to the foreground plane and not foreshortened, they could not be contained within the frame. A new painterly freedom accompanies this explosion of movement. Broad sweeps of the brush indicate torrents of beard and hair, from which a few wisps escape and seem to dissolve into air. Line is still operative, as always in Michelangelo, but here it becomes less important as a means for creating mass.

The last scene in the cycle, directly over the altar, is the first in Genesis, the *Separation of Light from Darkness* (fig. 17.35). Here, even our point of view changes: this is the only place on the ceiling that an event is presented as if viewed from below. Michelangelo painted this scene in a single day, and incisions on the fresco surface reveal that he



17.35. MICHELANGELO.
*Separation of Light from Darkness.*
1511–12. Fresco, 5'7" × 8'6½"
(1.7 × 2.6 m) Sistine Ceiling.
Michelangelo painted this scene
in one day.

changed the position of God's left arm at the last minute. Originally it was stretched further away from his body, but as Michelangelo painted, he decided to bring the two hands closer together, thus focusing God's actions into a smaller area.

The subject of this fresco is illuminated in Vigerio's *Christian Decachord* by a dialogue across the ages between Moses and St. John the Evangelist:

MOSES: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
JOHN: In the beginning was the Word.
MOSES: The earth was without form and void.
JOHN: The Word was with God and the Word was God.
MOSES: Darkness was on the face of the abyss.
JOHN: In Him was life and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness.
MOSES: The Spirit of God floated over the waters.
JOHN: And the Word was made flesh.

The words of Vigerio's dialogue suggest a potential unity between the opposing scenes of Moses and Christ on the walls by bringing together the Old Testament words, here put into the mouth of Moses, with New Testament text drawn from John's Gospel. The message of the pictorial cycle of the chapel, ceiling, and walls culminates above the altar, where the Eucharist is celebrated.

The brilliant light of the *Separation of Light from Darkness* seems to fall onto the pages of the open book held by the *Libyan Sibyl* (fig. 17.36); perhaps this is a blank book on which the first words of Genesis will be written. She turns to close her book and replace it on its desk while she looks downward at the altar, as if about to step from her throne. One of her *putti* points to her. The red chalk drawing for this figure (fig. 17.37) shows that, like the other female figures on the ceiling, the *Libyan Sibyl* was drawn from a male model, a not unexpected procedure during a period when there was little expectation that female models would be available. In the painting, Michelangelo has softened the male anatomy slightly. At the lower left-hand corner of the drawing he repeated the face, apparently in an effort to transform the features of his male model into the Hellenic beauty of a sibyl. In addition he analyzed the structure of the foot and hand, which in the fresco bear enormous weight.

The twenty nude youths seated around the cornice encapsulate beauty and power. At first sight they may appear out of place in a Christian chapel, especially since most of their poses are drawn from antique prototypes. There is, however, a long tradition of nudity in Christian art: all souls are naked before God and are so depicted in the Last Judgment (see figs. 14.37–14.38, 20.1). The



17.36. MICHELANGELO. *Libyan Sibyl*. 1511–12. Fresco. Sistine Ceiling.

youths are descendants of those who appeared a few years earlier in the background of Michelangelo's *Doni Madonna* (see fig. 16.39). They uphold not only the medallions, most of which depict biblical scenes from the Book of Kings, but also garlands of Della Rovere leaves. Whether or not the nudes can ever be fully "explained,"

*Above:* 17.37. MICHELANGELO. *Study for Libyan Sibyl.* 1511. Red chalk, $11\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2}"$ (28.9 × 21.4 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

surely on one level they represented in Michelangelo's mind a vision of a new and transfigured humanity.

The nudes offer various types, movements, and poses, as well as expressions that suggest that they are responding to the scenes they flank. While the earliest pairs are virtually symmetrical in pose, each later pair demonstrates a dramatic contrast in position. The beautiful proportions, the flowing contours, and the light shining on their youthful skin reflect in small scale the qualities of Adam in the *Creation of Adam.* One of the most impressive is the youth above Jeremiah (visible at the lower left in fig. 17.34). While his pose is balanced in elegant equilibrium, his eyes gaze into the abyss where God divides light from darkness.

The four spandrels at the corners of the chapel were painted with the adjacent sections of the ceiling and there is, therefore, a strong discrepancy in style between the first two, which are simple and straightforward in composition, and the complex designs, powerful masses, and drastic foreshortenings of the second two, which date from the final period of work. All four represent scenes from the Old Testament that prefigure the coming of Christ. *David Beheading Goliath* (fig. 17.38) is one of the two spandrels from the first section. The central interlocked figures create a clear narrative event that reflects Leonardo's and Michelangelo's experimentation with a unified composition—an effect here enhanced by the conical tent. When we compare this with one of the last of Michelangelo's



17.38. MICHELANGELO.
*David Beheading Goliath.*
1509. Fresco. Sistine Ceiling.
Michelangelo spent twelve days
painting this scene.

17.39. MICHELANGELO.
*Worship of the Brazen Serpent.*
1511–12. Fresco. Sistine Ceiling.
The complex composition of this spandrel took thirty days to paint. The black square near the bottom was left by the restorers to indicate how much of the color was obscured before the cleaning.

works on the ceiling, the *Worship of the Brazen Serpent* from 1511–12 (fig. 17.39), we can immediately see both the change in the scale of the figures and Michelangelo's move away from High Renaissance compositions toward more complex, centrifugal groupings of interlocking figures.

The subject of the Brazen Serpent was thought to foreshadow the Crucifixion: "Even as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). At the left, a young Moses lifts a woman's hand to the miracle-working image. On the right those who have yet to behold the serpent that will heal them writhe in a tangle of arms, legs, and pain-racked bodies seen in dramatic foreshortening. Never had figures been so treated, not even in the most extreme examples of the ancient Hellenistic style. Later artists, including the Venetian Jacopo Tintoretto, were greatly influenced by this composition (see figs. 19.40, 20.36, 20.45).

Restoration has freed Michelangelo's surfaces from layers of lamp, candle, and incense smoke, a coating of animal glue, and even an application of Greek wine in the eighteenth century to brighten the colors; after this layer had darkened with time, another restoration added extensive repainting. The results of the cleaning have banished forever the old contention that Michelangelo's colors were stony because of his background as a sculptor. The colors are as brilliant as those of the *Doni Madonna*. The flesh is delicately modeled and the drapery vibrates with contrasts of hue and vivacious iridescent effects. Isaiah, for example (see fig. 17.27), wears a tunic of a clear rose color, a blue cloak with a green lining, and an underskirt and sleeves of changing tones of gray, yellow, and lavender. Michelangelo's colors here help explain the color schemes used by painters in the following decade.

**THE SECOND PHASE OF THE TOMB OF POPE JULIUS II.** After the death of Julius in February 1513, Michelangelo returned to the project of the tomb. Many of the stones quarried for this project, languishing in Piazza San Pietro, had "gone bad," as Michelangelo described it, and some had even been stolen. Julius's heirs no longer required a free-standing tomb, probably because they were not sure if it would be possible, under a new pope, to place it in St. Peter's. One of the rejected designs of 1505 was revived, and drawings and the contract reveal that the tomb was to be attached to the wall, with the pope's remains interred in a sarcophagus on the second story and his figure shown either lifted from it or lowered into it by angels (fig. 17.40). Above, in a lofty niche, the Virgin and Child were to float as if in a vision. There were to be standing saints in other niches, but the rest was to have followed the 1505 project, except that the Victories would be reduced to six, the Captives to twelve, and the space for the door to the burial chamber filled with a relief.
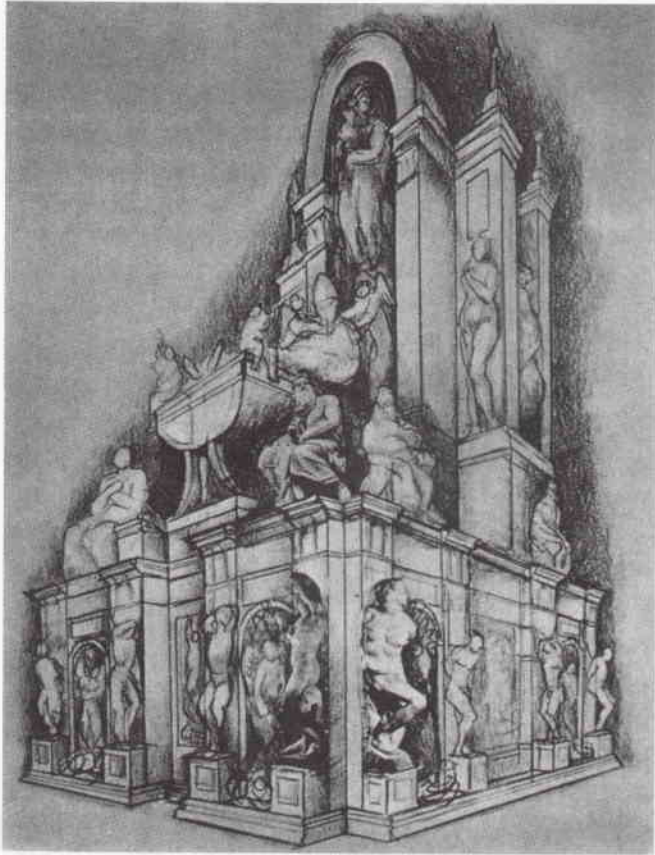
17.40. MICHELANGELO. Tomb of Pope Julius II, proposed reconstruction of project of 1513 (with figs. 17.41–17.43 shown in place). Commissioned by the heirs of Pope Julius II.

Although Michelangelo worked for three years on the tomb, only three of the statues were brought even close to completion. The *Moses* (fig. 17.41) was used on the reduced version of the project dedicated in 1545, but two *Captives* (see figs. 17.42–17.43), for which there was no room in the final version, were eventually given away by Michelangelo. *Moses* was originally intended to occupy a corner position on the second story, where he would have been seen sharply from below and as a transitional figure between two faces of the monument. Today the sculpture is in a central position and at ground level, and the torso seems unusually long, an effect that can be corrected if the viewer crouches and looks up at the figure from the far right.

This *Moses* has not just this moment come down from Mount Sinai, nor is he angry at the Israelites for worshipping the Golden Calf; perhaps for Michelangelo, representing a specific narrative moment would not capture the character of the man. Instead, Moses holds the Tablets of the Law and looks outward with prophetic inspiration as the man who saw God and talked with him on Mount Sinai. Moses' head features the horns that are not uncommon in Christian art (see p. 335). The figure is related to

some of the figures on the Sistine Ceiling: the left arm, for example, repeats almost exactly that of the *Cumaean Sibyl* (see fig. 17.30); the face, with a disturbed expression caused by Moses' encounter with God on the mountaintop, seems to recall that of the Almighty as painted on the ceiling (see fig. 17.34). The powerful drapery slung over the right knee expresses Moses' vitality, as does his spectacular beard. The bulk of the locks, smoothed by the hands of reverent visitors over the centuries, are pulled aside by the right hand and cascade down to the gigantic lap.

Michelangelo made small models for his earlier statues, and one for the *Moses* was seen by Raphael as early as 1511 (see p. 520). The bulk of the carving, however, is thought to have been done in 1513–16. In a letter of 1542, Michelangelo mentions that the *Moses* was almost finished, although he may have done more work on the face



17.41. MICHELANGELO. *Moses*. c. 1511, 1513–16, 1542–45(?). Marble, height 7'8½" (2.35 m). 🏛 S. Pietro in Vincoli, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Julius II for his tomb (fig. 17.40).

just before the statue was placed on the final tomb. Certainly, the subtle shifting of planes and the new softness of the surfaces are unlike the sharply defined, almost linear precision of Michelangelo's earlier sculptural style. Perhaps this was in part due to his intervening experience as a painter.

The two *Captives* in the Louvre may have been intended to flank the corner below *Moses* (see fig. 17.40). The *Captive* sometimes known incorrectly as the *Dying Slave* (fig. 17.42) is not dying but is overpowered by bonds against which he pulls idly, as if he were drowsy or overcome by the effects of a potion. In contrast, the *Captive* sometimes known as the *Rebellious Slave* (fig. 17.43) struggles against the bands that restrain his torso and arm. Although prefigured by some of the nudes on the Sistine Ceiling, the forms of this anguished figure have lost the resiliency of youth. As often with Michelangelo, the face held less interest for the artist than the body. With its backward twist and upward-rolling eyes, the figure suggests the ancient *Laocoön* (see fig. 17.3), but the closed mouth sug-

gests inner resistance to external forces. Drill marks are visible at the roots of the hair and among the locks. The crisscrossing sweeps of the three-toothed chisel, employed almost like a brush, capture the energy of Michelangelo's creative process. The muscles are no longer individually defined and separated, but flow together in a manner that obliterates the boundaries between leg and torso, torso and arm.

For thirty-two years, Julius had served as cardinal of San Pietro in Vincoli (St. Peter in Bonds, or Chains), where the altar enshrines the chains with which St. Peter was bound. As a result Julius became identified with the church, as contemporary panegyrics and lampoons remind us. His tomb was eventually erected there, and Raphael made St. Peter in his *Liberation of St. Peter from Prison* (see fig. 17.51) a recognizable portrait of Julius. The Introit of the Mass celebrating this event contains a verse from Psalm 138: "Lord, thou hast proved me, and known me: Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up." The original Latin phrase translated as "my rising up" is



17.42. MICHELANGELO. *Captive*. 1505–6, 1513–16. Marble, height 7'6" (2.3 m). The Louvre, Paris. Commissioned by Pope Julius II for his tomb (see fig. 17.40).



17.43. MICHELANGELO. *Captive*. 1513–16. Marble, height 7'⅝" (2.15 m). The Louvre, Paris. Commissioned by Pope Julius II for his tomb (see fig. 17.40).

literally "my resurrection," and that is what we were intended to see—dimly through the tomb's door in 1505, triumphant on the second story in 1513: the pope released from earthly life to the joy of heaven.

In 1550 Vasari wrote that the *Captives* were to be identified with the provinces captured by the pope, while Michelangelo's pupil Ascanio Condivi said they were the Liberal Arts held captive at the pope's death. An alternative explanation is that these figures are being held prisoner by sin and that, by the example of St. Peter, they can appeal for the deliverance promised by the Victories in the niches. The herms or *termini*, symbols of death, were bound to the *Captives* by narrow bands of cloth, and the Latin word *vincula*, the source for *vinculi* in the name of the church, can be translated as "bands."

In both the 1505 and the 1513 versions, the tomb would have been an unprecedented combination of architecture and sculpture, rich in its complexity, powerful in its struggling figures, compelling in its suggestion of the torment of earthly existence and the promise of heavenly release.



17.44. Iconographic diagram of Raphael's cycles for the Vatican apartments (*Stanze*), Rome.

A. STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA, 1509–11:

1. *Poetry*, 1510–11 (see fig. 17.45).

2. *Philosophy*, 1510–11 (see figs. 17.45, 17.47).

3. *Fortitude, Prudence,* and *Temperance; Tribonian Handing the Law Code to Justinian; Gregory IX Approving the Decretals,* 1510–11 (see fig. 17.46).

4. *Disputà*, 1510–11 (see figs. 17.46, 17.49).


B. STANZA D'ELIODORO, 1512–14:

5. *Liberation of St. Peter from Prison*, 1513 (see fig. 17.51).

6. *Expulsion of Heliodorus*, 1512–14 (see fig. 17.52).

7. *Mass of Bolsena*, 1512 (see fig. 17.52).

8. *Expulsion of Attila*, 1513 (see fig. 17.51).

And—in the end—it would have been transparently simple in its message. But the grandness of the conception meant that it was not to be: money, time, and historical circumstances led to a pallid wall tomb several decades later.

# Raphael in Rome

While Michelangelo was at work on the first campaign of the Sistine Ceiling, the young Raphael arrived in Rome— exactly when or why we are not sure. His style appealed to the pope, who stopped the work he had commissioned from the more conservative painter Sodoma and turned over the decorating of his Vatican apartments (the *Stanze,* or rooms) to Raphael (fig. 17.44). The first room to be painted, from 1509 to 1511, was the Stanza della Segnatura (Room of the Signature; figs. 17.45–17.49), named after the highest papal tribunal, whose judgments require the pope's signature. Leaving the ceiling ornamentation that Sodoma had started largely intact, Raphael had walls of brick built over the pre-existing (and perhaps unfinished) frescoes of the walls, covering some of the decoration at the top of the arched walls. On the new walls he painted frescoes that set forth in their subjects the new ideals of Julius's reign. It is typical of the High Renaissance interest in simplifying and synthesizing that the subjects of the four walls of the Stanza della Segnatura—Poetry, Justice/Law, Theology, and Philosophy—encompass all the major areas of human learning. The first to be carried out was the scene popularly known as the *Disputà* (see figs. 17.46, 17.49), in which Raphael used clouds and figures to suggest the apse of a church. The subject, which might better be called simply "Theology," is an exposition of the doctrine of the Eucharist, with Raphael's invention

C. STANZA DELL'INCENDIO (RAPHAEL AND PUPILS), 1514–17:

9. *Victory of Leo III.*

10. *Battle of Ostia.*

11. *Fire in the Borgo.*

12. *Coronation of Charlemagne.*


D. STANZA DEL COSTANTINO (WORKSHOP OF RAPHAEL), 1519–25:

13. *Donation of Constantine.*

14. *Apparition of the Cross to Constantine.*

15. *Victory of Constantine over Maxentius.*

16. *Baptism of Constantine.*

17.45. RAPHAEL. *Poetry* (left lunette) and *Philosophy* (right lunette), also known as the *School of Athens*. 1510–11. Frescoes, each 19 × 27' (5.8 × 8.2 m). Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Julius II. The popular but somewhat misleading name the *School of Athens* dates back only to the eighteenth century.

emphasizing that the Church is an institution composed of people rather than architecture. The sacrament is traced from its origin in heaven, where God the Father, Christ, the Virgin, and St. John the Baptist are enthroned among saints, patriarchs, and prophets in a semicircle of clouds, while angels fill the golden sky above. The dove of the Holy Spirit appears between child-angels carrying the Gospels, while the wafer that represents the consecrated bread of the Eucharist appears on the altar below, displayed in a shining monstrance. This wafer, representing the body of Christ, marks the center of the perspective scheme as well as the focus for the human and heavenly activity that fills the scene. Raphael's scheme is brilliant in

its simplicity and a powerful vision of the role of the Church in offering answers to the discussions taking place in the scene opposite, which represents Philosophy.

The tranquillity of the heavenly figures contrasts with the active theologians on earth, who seem to be debating the nature of the sacrament. At the left is Jerome, his head bowed, contemplating his translation of the Bible, while Gregory, a portrait of Julius II before he grew the famous beard, gazes at the revelation upon the altar. Among the figures at the right can be made out the standing Sixtus IV and, with a laurel crown, Dante. Raphael endowed the figures with a physical presence and gravity of bearing that are new to his style, and set them in an ideal perspective

that, as in Leonardo's *Last Supper* (see fig. 16.23), is not the point of view of a person standing in front of the fresco but that of a colossus. These High Renaissance paintings depict not another room but another realm.

While Raphael was painting the *Disputà*, Michelangelo continued work on the Sistine Ceiling behind locked doors. Raphael's newly monumental figures seem to have been his own independent response to the expectations of Julius. At the apex of the celestial dome, still covered with gold leaf and enlivened with raised nodes as in Signorelli's Orvieto frescoes (see fig. 14.37), vague angelic shapes begin to take on substance along glittering, incised rays. Before them soar archangels, their hands linked and their drapery billowing in the golden light. Their spiral poses, also found in the figures below, are characteristic of Raphael's style throughout his career, as are the flowing lines of their drapery.

The medallions inserted by Raphael into Sodoma's ceiling decorations are related to the frescoes of the four walls below. An allegorical figure of Theology, for example, is enthroned above the *Disputà*. Facing the *Disputà* is the *School of Athens*, or *Philosophy* (see figs. 17.45, 17.47), which is recognized by many as a culmination of the High Renaissance ideal of formal and spatial harmony. Like the *Disputà*'s theologians on the opposite wall, here the philosophers of classical antiquity are shown similarly engaged in solemn discussion. In both religion and philosophy, there are no simple answers.



17.46. RAPHAEL. Left wall: allegorical figures of *Fortitude*, *Prudence*, and *Temperance*, with *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity* (left lunette); *Tribonian Handing the Law Code to Justinian* (recently attributed to Lorenzo Lotto; left of window); *Gregory IX Approving the Decretals* (right of window), with portraits of Julius II as Gregory IX, and of Cardinals Giovanni de' Medici and Alessandro Farnese (later Pope Paul III); right wall: *Disputà* (*Disputation over the Sacrament*) or *Theology* (right lunette). 1510–11. Fresco, size of *Disputà*, 19 × 27' (5.8 × 8.2 m). Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican, Rome.

17.47. RAPHAEL. *Philosophy*, detail of fig. 17.45.
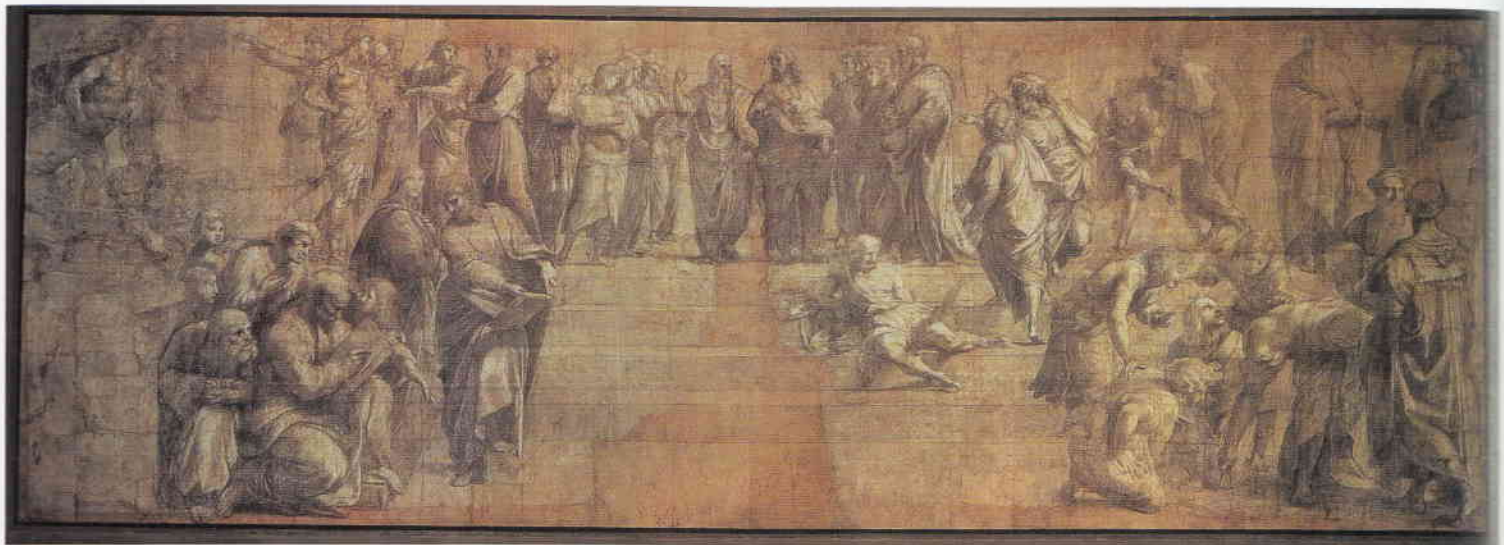


17.48. RAPHAEL. Cartoon for *Philosophy*. c. 1510. Charcoal, partly reworked with black chalk, on paper, 9'4" × 26'4" (2.85 × 8.04 m). Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

The cartoon is made up of about 200 sheets of paper glued together (one scholar has counted 195 sheets, another 210).
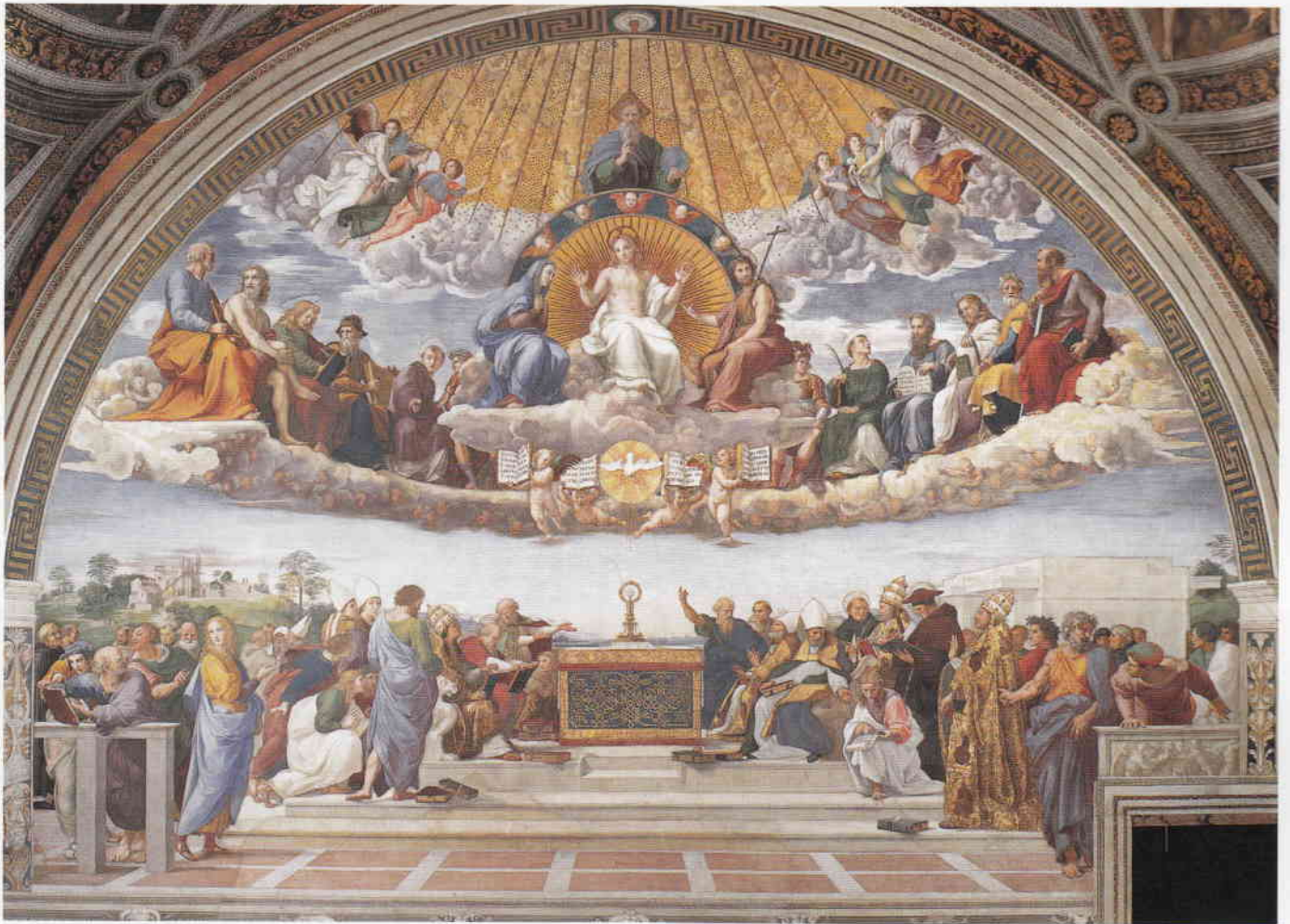
17.49. RAPHAEL. *Disputà*, detail of fig. 17.46.

The vaulted structure of the *School of Athens* uses the Roman Doric order preferred by Bramante. But although this space suggests Bramante's designs for St. Peter's (see fig. 17.13), Raphael's setting is not meant to suggest a real building; it is a pictorial invention designed to establish a grand classicized setting for his debaters. At left and right statues of Apollo and Minerva—ancient gods of the arts and wisdom—preside over the assemblage. In the center stand Plato and Aristotle, who still today, as in the Renaissance, are recognized as the two greatest philosophers of antiquity. Aristotle holds his *Nichomachean Ethics*, a text that stresses the rational nature of humanity and the need for moral behavior; his hand is placed horizontally, as if emphasizing that the earth is the source for his observations on the nature of reality. Plato holds his *Timaeus*, in which he describes the origin and nature of the universe; he points upward to indicate that his ideas come from the realm of the mind. At the left Socrates can be seen engaged in argument, enumerating points on his fingers. The old man sprawling on the steps is Diogenes. At the lower left Pythagoras demonstrates his system of proportions on a slate, while at the extreme right Ptolemy contemplates a celestial globe held before him and, just to the left, Euclid bends down to draw a circle on another slate. Euclid is a portrait of Bramante—an appropriate choice considering the latter's concern with geometry and centrally planned, domed architecture. At the right-hand edge, on the lowest level, Raphael has painted his self-portrait looking out. He is standing next to his portrait of Sodoma; one wonders how much Sodoma, whose frescoes were being covered up, appreciated the compliment. A second self-portrait of Raphael is found in the scene on the adjacent wall, devoted to Poetry (see fig. 17.45).

Raphael's large *ben finito* ("finely-finished") cartoon for the lower band of figures (see fig. 17.48) reveals the care with which he developed the relationships between them and the interchanges of glance and gesture that create a sense of both lively intellectual debate and aesthetic harmony. Cartoons were usually cut up to be used to transfer the design of each figure to the plaster wall in preparation for painting. As a result, most are lost. In this case a two-cartoon process was followed. This large cartoon was

cut into at least eight segments, and pupils or assistants then used the *spolvero* technique or incising to transfer the outlines of the figures to more simplified cartoons, called "substitute cartoons," which were then used to transfer the figural design to the plaster wall. The *ben finito* cartoon is divided into squares that must have matched similar lines on the plaster wall, guaranteeing the proper placement of each figure within the larger whole. When the *ben finito* cartoon was reassembled is not known, but it or its segments would have been kept in the *stanza* or nearby to remind members of the workshop of the importance of maintaining not only the relationships between the figures but also the *chiaroscuro* effects that are so important for High Renaissance art. The cartoon's preservation is a testimony to the respect Raphael commanded at the time, as it could have had no practical purpose after the fresco was completed.

In the foreground of the *School of Athens* sits a lonely man, his elbow on a marble block, his head propped on his hand. Wrapped in his own thoughts, he holds a pen over a piece of paper. Instead of the flowing mantles of the other philosophers, this bearded, burly man wears the short, hooded smock and soft boots of a sixteenth-century stonecutter. This figure, who has the features of Michelangelo, does not appear in the cartoon, revealing that he was added at the last minute, during the process of painting (evidence from the surface of the fresco indicates that a separate cartoon was made for the figure). Apparently, Raphael went into the Sistine Chapel with the rest of Rome in August 1511, experienced the new style, and decided to add this tribute to the older artist to his own work. Perhaps he had seen the sculptor sitting dejectedly in the Piazza San Pietro, alongside one of the blocks for the tomb of Julius II. At any rate, Raphael's own style would never be quite the same. His painted stonecutter has a massive power not seen elsewhere in the *School of Athens*, nor indeed in Raphael's entire earlier production.

Raphael's interest in Michelangelo's style is also evident in the relief that decorates the left pier. A red chalk preparatory drawing (fig. 17.50) reveals how fully Raphael has mastered the representation of nude men in motion.

Raphael put his discovery of Michelangelo's style to work in the lunette representing three of the four Cardinal Virtues: *Fortitude*, *Prudence*, and *Temperance* (see fig. 17.46). The fourth, *Justice*, is in the ceiling roundel above, while the three Theological Virtues—*Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*—are represented by the *putti* accompanying the allegorical figures in the lunette. All the monumentality of the last phase of the Sistine Ceiling is here, but Raphael avoided the tension of Michelangelo's figures by infusing his own sense of grace into the grand manner. The composition is unified by the flow of line that sweeps from figure



17.50. RAPHAEL. *Fighting Men* (study for relief sculpture in *Philosophy*). 1510–11. Red chalk over leadpoint, 15 × 11" (37.9 × 28.1 cm). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

to figure, and all the surfaces glow with the fresh, blond tones and silvery light seen throughout the room. *Fortitude* holds a Della Rovere oak tree, and her legs and drapery seem to be derived from Michelangelo's *Moses*. *Prudence*, as in Piero della Francesca's Urbino portrait (see fig. 11.31), has two faces, one young, looking into a mirror, one old and bearded, looking backward. The long loops of *Temperance*'s bridle continue the curves of the composition.

The fourth wall in this stanza represents *Poetry* (see fig. 17.45), with the central figure of Apollo leading a band of writers that includes Dante, Homer, and Sappho. Here Raphael transforms the intruding window into a positive force in the composition, changing it into a base for the mountain of Parnassus on which the writers are gathered.

The suave classicism of Raphael's Roman style is already showing signs of giving way to a new, more vigorous manner in the lunette of the Virtues in the Stanza della Segnatura. This dramatic, energetic phase comes to its climax in the second of the chambers, the Stanza d'Eliodoro (figs. 17.51–17.52), apparently commissioned by Julius II in

August 1511, when he still wore the beard he had grown the preceding winter. As early as February 1512, the pope shaved his beard because things were "at a good point." An early study by Raphael for one of the wall compositions shows him without it. When the news of the Battle of Ravenna, which seemed at first to be a defeat, reached Rome on April 14, 1512, the pope apparently began to grow his beard again; he is shown wearing it in three wall frescoes of the Stanza d'Eliodoro, and he is still wearing it on Michelangelo's final version of the tomb.

On one of the window walls, Raphael painted the *Mass of Bolsena* (see fig. 17.52), recounting a miracle that took place in 1263. A Bohemian priest who did not believe in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist was celebrating Mass when, to his astonishment, the consecrated bread shed drops of blood in the form of a cross, which fell on the corporal, a cloth used in the Mass. The bloodstained cloth, still preserved today as a relic in the Cathedral of Orvieto (see pp. 128–33), was adored by Julius II for a full day during his victorious march northward in 1506. Apparently, he attributed his success then, and the triumph of his troops over the French after Ravenna—the news of which reached him on June 29, 1512—to the intervention of this relic. In Raphael's representation he is shown as if observing the original event of 1263.

The compositional movement, skillfully arranged around the off-center window, rises from a group of mothers at the lower left to torch-bearing acolytes, the amazed priest, and the calm pope, seen in profile with a full beard. Below, at the right, kneel the officers of the Swiss troops who spearheaded Julius's triumph in 1512. There is a greater breadth of handling here than in the



17.51. RAPHAEL. *Expulsion of Attila* (left wall); *Liberation of St. Peter from Prison* (right wall). 1513. Fresco, base line of left wall 21'8" (6.6 m). Commissioned by Pope Julius II. Stanza d'Eliodoro, Vatican, Rome.

17.52. RAPHAEL. *Mass of Bolsena* (right wall), 1512. *Expulsion of Heliodorus* (left wall). 1512–14. Fresco, base line 21'8" (6.6 m). Commissioned by Pope Julius II, who is seen at the far left, carried in on a portable throne. Raphael stands behind, his head below Julius's extended left hand. Stanza d'Eliodoro, Vatican, Rome.

Stanza della Segnatura, as well as heavier, Ionic architecture and a richness of color new in Raphael's art.

The second *stanza* is named after the fresco that depicts the *Expulsion of Heliodorus* (fig. 17.52), an incident from the biblical book of Maccabees. One of the successors of Alexander the Great sent the general Heliodorus to steal the treasure of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. In the midst of the raid a heavenly rider wearing gold armor appeared upon a white horse accompanied by two youths "notable in their strength and beautiful in their glory." The general dropped the treasure and fell blinded before them. As in the *Mass of Bolsena*, the pope saw a parallel between this event and his own battle to expel a group of rebellious cardinals who had sided with the king of France. The bearded pontiff enters the scene carried on his portable papal throne; the bearer in the foreground with the square

beard has been identified as a portrait of either Marcantonio Raimondi, whose engravings of Raphael's compositions gave them wide currency and popularity (see fig. 17.60), or Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano (see figs. 18.61–18.65). Raphael himself, displaying a modest beard, is partially hidden behind the chair.

Raphael's spiraling figures in the whirlwind group at the right have been invested with the weight and muscular power of Michelangelo. The disgrace of the general and the rage of his attendants are contrasted with the inspired anger of the celestial messengers, who float above the pavement. Like virtually all riders on rearing horses for the next three centuries, the celestial warrior exhibits the influence of Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari* (see fig. 16.30). As in the *Mass of Bolsena*, Raphael's architecture has changed sharply since the *School of Athens*; the masses are now

heavier and more compact. The colors offer greater resonance, the vaults of the Temple shining with a deep golden light, and, in harmony with the *Mass of Bolsena*, the color is dominated by the reds and blacks of the pope and his entourage, against which the paler tones of the kneeling women are deliberately contrasted.

Facing the *Mass of Bolsena*, Raphael painted the *Liberation of St. Peter from Prison* (see fig. 17.51), which illustrates a passage from the Acts of the Apostles:

> The same night Peter was sleeping between soldiers, bound with chains: and keepers outside the door guarded the prison. And the angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the prison. Hitting Peter on the side, he awoke him, saying, "Rise up quickly." And the chains fell off Peter's hands. . . . And he went out, and followed the angel. Peter knew not what the angel had done, and believed that he had seen a vision (12:6–9).

Raphael's Peter is a portrait of Julius II, for whom Peter's salvation was a reference to the deliverance of the papacy from the French invader. It was while he was praying at the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, where the chains that bound St. Peter are displayed, that the pope received the news of his unexpected victory in 1512. That night, in a re-enactment of the liberation of Peter, Julius led a procession to Castel Sant'Angelo with more torches than Rome had ever seen. But not long after, in 1513, probably while Raphael was painting this fresco, the pope died, and the subject may have taken on an additional meaning: the liberation of the old warrior into the eternal light of heaven.

Raphael's prison is a massive arch built of rusticated blocks like those Bramante was using at the time for the new palaces for the papal administration. The grate through which we look into the dungeon was derived from earlier representations of John the Baptist in prison, but the spectacular effect results from Raphael's new interest in and investigation of light. Light effects are everywhere: clouds drift in front of a waning moon and torches gleam on the armor of the guards, but the light from the angel transcends all, filling the prison and shining in the dark streets through which he leads the spellbound Peter.

The room is completed by a final, dramatic fresco, the *Expulsion of Attila* (see fig. 17.51). This event took place in the fifth century, when the unarmed Pope Leo I routed the king of the Huns outside Ravenna through the miraculous intervention of Saints Peter and Paul. Raphael has set the event before the gates of Rome as an allusion to Julius's expulsion of the French invaders, and perhaps even to the deliverance of the papal city from King Louis XII, who, in the summer of 1511, could easily have taken it and

did not. A Roman aqueduct and the half of the Colosseum that was still standing can be seen in the distance at the left, while at the right the advance of the barbarians is marked by flames in the forest. The seemingly wild confusion of the foreground resolves itself rapidly into a collision between the calm might of heaven at the upper left and the impotent fury of the barbarians at the right. Riding a mule, the pope extends one hand, and as the saints above draw their swords, Attila turns away terrified.

The movement of the figures and the treatment of forms and colors in this work have sometimes been described as "Baroque" or "proto-Baroque," referring to the exuberant style that came to dominate Catholic Europe in the seventeenth century. This might almost be a work by the seventeenth-century Flemish painter Rubens, whose battle scenes are, in fact, based on those of Leonardo (see fig. 16.30) and Raphael. The *Expulsion of Attila* was completed after the death of Julius II. It had originally been intended that he would be shown seated on the mule, but instead his successor, Giovanni de' Medici, appears as Pope Leo X, claiming for himself the miracle of Leo I.

The old pope was gone, yet Raphael had one more chance to immortalize him. The *Sistine Madonna* (fig. 17.53) was the first Madonna by Raphael to be painted on canvas, perhaps because it was intended to be portable. It has been suggested that it was created to hang above the bier of Julius II. The picture is certainly commemorative, for St. Sixtus, on the left, is a portrait of Julius II, with the shaggy beard and moustache of his last, illness-ridden days, just as in the *Liberation of St. Peter*. His cope is decorated with oak leaves, and an acorn crowns his tiara. At the bottom, two *putti* lean on a wooden ledge and gaze upward. The wooden ledge has been identified as the lid of Julius's coffin, with the papal tiara placed above his head, as the crown still is today in royal funerals. At the right St. Barbara gazes downward; as the patron saint of men-at-arms, she is an appropriate pendant for Sixtus/Julius. Because she was liberated from a tower (its battlements can be glimpsed behind her), she is the patron saint of the hour of death and of liberation from the earthly prison that is the body.

The curtains are parted as if to reveal the Madonna walking toward us, holding the Christ Child. Mother and child look upon us with eyes of unusual size, depth, and luminosity. Mary's pose is identical with one conceived by Michelangelo for the design of the tomb of Julius II (see fig. 17.40). Perhaps the notion of the floating Virgin was proposed by Julius to both artists. Another possibility is that it was developed by Michelangelo in 1505, not long after the completion of Fra Bartolommeo's *Vision of St. Bernard* (see fig. 16.51) and, like many of Michelangelo's ideas, later influenced Raphael.

17.53. RAPHAEL. *Sistine Madonna*.
1513. Canvas, 8'8½" × 6'5" (2.7 × 1.9 m).
Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. Commissioned
by Pope Julius II for S. Sisto, Piacenza.

In the nineteenth century, Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* became a popular representation of ideal motherhood, while in the late twentieth century the two somewhat nonchalant *putti* were widely reproduced as examples of typical childish behavior. The *Sistine Madonna*, in its rising and descending curves, its subtle balancing of masses, its rich tonalities of gold and green, gray and blue, and its air of peace and fulfillment, is one of Raphael's most memorable creations, and its popularity is well deserved. No one could have predicted at the time of his arrival in Rome, fresh from absorbing the ideas of Leonardo and Michelangelo in Florence, that in a few years Raphael would be the great master at work here, commanding the full authority of the High Renaissance style.

**RAPHAEL'S LATER PORTRAITS.** The sitter for the portrait known today as the *Donna Velata* (*Veiled Woman*; fig. 17.54) may have inspired the figure of the Virgin in the *Sistine Madonna*. The manner in which the woman looks out toward us builds on Leonardo's innovation in the *Mona Lisa* (see fig. 16.29). The painting's rich, glowing color suggests that Raphael was interested in the colorism of Venice. There is no record that he traveled to Venice, but in 1511 Sebastiano del Piombo (see pp. 531–34) brought to Rome a personal variation of the Venetian style. Venetian influence may well explain the rich color chords of the frescoes in Julius's second *stanza* and the dazzling white-and-gold drapery of this portrait, not to mention the depth of the sitter's dark eyes and

17.54. RAPHAEL. *Donna Velata* (*Veiled Woman*). c. 1513. Canvas, 33½ × 23½" (85 × 60 cm). Pitti Gallery, Florence.

the golden gray of the background, which is reflected in warm highlights on the richly painted sleeves.

The death of Julius II brought Michelangelo's boyhood acquaintance Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, to the papal throne as Leo X. The new pope—an easygoing, luxury-loving, corpulent man only thirty-eight years old at the time of his election—had little interest in Michelangelo. "È troppo terribile," said the pope, "non si puol pratichare chon lui" ("He is too violent; one can't deal with him"). Commissions in the Vatican went chiefly to Raphael and his increasing entourage. Leo provided a relaxed atmosphere, and the Vatican was filled not only with artists, poets, philosophers, and musicians, but also with dancers, animal

chestnut hair, the soft glow of the stones in the necklace, and the luminous pearl hanging from the veil. In its asymmetrical placing, this jewel brings all the other ellipses of the composition into relationship with each other. Simultaneously simple and complex, Raphael's composition offers yet another example of his ability to create variety within synthesis.

The portrait of *Baldassare Castiglione* (fig. 17.55) is also typical of the moment of balance Raphael achieved at this time in Rome. As we have seen, Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* established the qualities expected of an ideal gentleman in the High Renaissance (see pp. 464–66). In addition, the book offered a new interpretation of the role of women in society: Castiglione's *nobil donna* was a woman of the court, educated in ancient languages and, like men, with many "virtues of the mind." Castiglione was a friend of Raphael, who here represented him with the *riposo*, or inner calm, that the author deemed essential for a gentleman. The picture has been cut at the bottom, but old copies show it with the folded hands in their entirety. If it were complete, the appearance of harmony and restraint would be even more impressive. The black, white, and gray of the garments embody the sobriety and restraint preached by Castiglione to a society that was reacting against the flamboyant colors of late Quattrocento dress. Raphael, however, created a resonant coloristic effect by placing this monochromatic scheme against



17.55. RAPHAEL. *Baldassare Castiglione*. c. 1515. Canvas, 32¼ × 26½" (82 × 67 cm). The Louvre, Paris.
Rembrandt once tried to acquire this painting at auction. The bidding went out of his reach, but he never forgot the dignity of Raphael's composition, and twice did his own self-portrait in the pose of Raphael's *Castiglione*.

tamers, and clowns. Pious pilgrims from northern Europe were shocked by the appearance of the pope and his cardinals in hunting dress and would have been outraged had they attended Vatican ceremonies, including funerals and beatifications, at which the Olympian deities were extolled. The pontiff, who dropped the aggressive political policy of his predecessor, seems to have had little interest in his spiritual mission and no inkling of how dangerous the challenges led by Martin Luther would be to the Catholic Church.

A few years after his accession, the pope sat for a group portrait in which Raphael demonstrated a searching analysis of character (fig. 17.56). The pope is not occupied with affairs of state but with antiquarian erudition and the delight of possession. He sits before a table where he has been perusing a splendid Trecento illuminated manuscript so accurately represented that the original, still preserved, has been identified. Beside the manuscript rests a silver bell with gold top and gold borders, covered with classical vine scrolls. Both manuscript and bell are rendered with such precision that we wonder if Raphael used a magnifying glass like the one held by the pope. To the left stands the pope's cousin, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, son of the murdered Giuliano and subsequently Pope Clement VII. The pope's nephew, Cardinal Luigi de' Rossi, stands behind him to the right. The three gazes cross but do not connect, creating a sense of tension that is increased by the dissonance between the warm orange-reds of the tablecloth and cardinals' attire and the cool, purplish-crimson of the pope's cope and hat. The pope's puffy countenance is rendered, like his shapely hands, with striking fidelity. The polished brass sphere on the chair contains a distorted reflection of the room, a demonstration of technical skill similar to examples found in earlier Flemish paintings, but, although one can make out a window that lights the scene, the figure of the painter in the reflection is reduced to a few vague vibrations.

Under Leo X, Raphael rose to a level of power and wealth not previously enjoyed by any Italian artist. At Bramante's death in 1514, Raphael became papal architect and was charged with continuing the construction of St. Peter's. At the same time, he was showered with commissions for Madonnas, portraits, frescoes, and mosaics. He was asked to paint two more *stanze* and to design the decorations of other rooms in the Vatican, including a loggia built by Bramante and a *loggetta* and bathroom for Cardinal Bibbiena, one of Leo X's friends. Raphael meanwhile directed the construction of new buildings, including at least one church and one palace, and a villa for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (see fig. 17.61). He was also appointed Superintendent of Antiquities—the first such position to be documented—and given power over excavations in the



17.56. RAPHAEL. *Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Luigi de' Rossi.* c. 1517. Panel, 5'½" × 3'11" (1.54 × 1.2 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Originally owned by Pope Leo X. Evidence suggests that during the Renaissance the presence of a portrait could substitute for a missing individual. At the wedding of Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, a niece of Francis I, on September 8, 1518, this portrait was placed behind the table where the bride was seated to compensate for the missing pope and cardinals.

papal dominions. One of his projects was a map of ancient Rome that identified the monuments known at the time.

RAPHAEL'S WORKSHOP. To keep up with his commitments, Raphael employed assistants, including two masters named Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga. On occasion, additional painters were called in to help. As a result, the execution of Raphael's designs is at times uneven and the work of less skilled pupils painfully evident. Even some of Raphael's contemporaries, in an era indulgent toward the workshop system, deplored these lapses. There is evidence that Raphael sometimes asked his pupils to work up compositions on the basis of small sketches or even verbal directions. Some of these are

preserved, with an occasional possible correction from Raphael, but since they seldom correspond exactly to the finished work, the master must have stepped in at some point.

Under the pressures exerted upon Raphael in the seven years between 1513 and the artist's untimely death in 1520, it is surprising that any substantial proportion of the finished paintings could have come from his brush, and yet in the most important commissions more than half the surface is by him. Most of the detailed life studies, however, are by his pupils, who then presumably enlarged the approved model into a full-scale cartoon and carried out the preliminary painting. Only by this system of pre-planning the design and execution of paintings was it possible for Raphael to carry out so much himself, on such a grand scale, and with the freshness of original creation.

THE SISTINE TAPESTRIES. The grandest of the pictorial projects assigned to Raphael in this period was a series of ten tapestries, for which he produced ten full-scale cartoons in color as guides for tapestry weavers in Flanders (see figs. 17.57–17.59). The finished tapestries, representing scenes from the Acts of the Apostles, were a prestigious commission, for they were for the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel and covered approximately 1,200 square feet (112 square meters). They completed the iconographic cycle that depicted the Lives of Moses and Christ, the ancestry of Christ, the prophets and sibyls who foretold the coming of Christ, and scenes from Genesis (see fig. 14.18 for a diagram showing where the tapestries were hung in the chapel).

Raphael certainly understood that his compositions would be on display at the center of papal power in a complex decorated by Botticelli, Perugino, Signorelli, Ghirlandaio, and Michelangelo. While so exalted a destination probably did not cause him to alter his style, it did inspire him to devote his energies—and probably those of his whole shop as well—to the development of these figural compositions. Tapestries were much more expensive than frescoes or oil paintings (see pp. 155–56), and Raphael must have been aware that his series would have an elite status within the chapel's historic decoration. Unfortunately, the tapestries based on Raphael's designs are seldom displayed in the Sistine Chapel today.

Raphael's tapestries combine large, dramatic figures with backgrounds featuring a landscape setting or the new architecture of the High Renaissance. His compositions became famous and were reproduced in additional series of tapestries in later centuries, and in engraved copies as well. As a result, they became the most influential of his creations. They provided inspiration for such later artists as Nicolas Poussin, Domenichino, Jacques-Louis David,

and Jean-Dominique Ingres. The original cartoons were cut into strips for the convenience of the weavers. Eventually three were lost. The other seven were acquired by King Charles I of England in 1630, but they were not remounted and exhibited as works of art until 1699.

The cartoons were painted in a glue-based watercolor over Raphael's charcoal drawings, which are often still visible through the applied color. Some of the painting was executed by pupils, especially Giulio Romano, probably under Raphael's direct supervision, but much of the color seems to have been laid on by Raphael himself, and in certain areas the beauty and emotional fire of his mature style come through to us unaltered. Heads, drapery, landscape, and even, at times, architecture are painted with a new sketchy freedom that may have been related to ancient Roman painting techniques. Perhaps Raphael's immersion in antiquity had brought him into contact with Roman first-century painting.

But there are other sources as well. Raphael closely studied Masaccio's frescoes (see fig. 8.7), reviving Masaccio's method of enhancing the physical bulk and psychological presence of his figures by enveloping them in voluminous mantles. Raphael may have revisited Florence briefly in 1515, just before embarking on the tapestry cycle. To an artist with Raphael's sense of history, it may have seemed appropriate to return to Masaccio's images, in which the barefoot apostles had been invested with such dignity and power.

Raphael set the average height of a standing foreground figure at approximately 8 feet, more than two-thirds the total height of the pictorial field. To keep the figures large in comparison with their setting, they are set in front of massive architecture that is cut off at the top by the frame; breaks here and there allow us to see, in the middle distance, the full classical order. The figures' heroic proportions combine with the restricted space and the realism of Raphael's physical types to create yet another Renaissance vision of ennobled humanity. Unlike that of Michelangelo's ceiling, however, this ideal race is neither nude nor predominantly male: in Raphael's designs, the man and woman in the street are raised to heroic stature, rough garments, bare feet, and all.

In the *Healing of the Lame Man* (fig. 17.57), the group of figures is centralized at the Gate of the Temple, the Porch of Solomon (Acts 3:1–11). In the cartoon, St. Peter lifts the lame man by the left hand, instead of the right, as in the text, because Raphael knew that in the tapestry the composition would be reversed; for the same reason St. Peter blesses with his left. The setting is surprising and has even been called proto-Baroque in its vibrancy of form, light, and color. Apostles, mothers, children, and cripples move between spiral columns that reveal Raphael's interest

17.57. RAPHAEL. *Healing of the Lame Man.* 1515–16. Tapestry cartoon, watercolor over charcoal on paper, 11'3" × 17'7" (3.4 × 5.4 m). Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Commissioned by Pope Leo X Medici for the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel.

Raphael's cartoons are the earliest surviving examples of tapestry cartoons on paper; it took him and his workshop a little more than a year to complete the ten cartoons. The cost of the cartoons and the weaving of the ten tapestries was 16,000 ducats, more than five times the amount paid to Michelangelo for painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

in historical correctness, for the screen before the chancel of Old St. Peter's had been formed by a group of Late Antique spiral columns that were believed to have come from the Temple of Solomon, although in actuality they were probably brought to Rome in the fourth century CE from Syria. Since it was believed that Christ had leaned against one of these columns to rest while teaching, in the Cinquecento people supposedly possessed by demons tied themselves to it in an effort to effect a cure. These columns were removed during the construction of Bramante's St. Peter's and eventually relocated in various parts of the new building. In the original columns, spiral fluting alternates with vine scrolls and *putti*, an unusual combination retained by Raphael, who apparently found pictorial excitement in the contrasting motifs. The columns' pulsating contours contrast with the other forms, especially the broad outlines of St. Peter's cloak.

While the cartoons bring us close to Raphael and to the workings of his studio, we must remember that the goal of

this exercise was the production of a series of tapestries; it is only an accident of history that some of the cartoons survive. Looking at the tapestry woven after Raphael's lost cartoon of the *Conversion of St. Paul* (fig. 17.58), we see the composition as Raphael intended and not reversed as in the cartoon. Raphael's interpretation of the scene is dramatic, with Saul's horse running away, Christ appearing in the sky in a flash of light accompanied by *putti*, and soldiers rushing into the scene in astonishment. In the figure of Saul, Raphael demonstrated both his skill in composing the body and his ability at foreshortening. The monochromatic scenes in the lower border are designed to resemble bronze reliefs, but they glitter with the silver-gilt thread that predominates in these areas. Some of these border scenes refer to the life of Pope Leo X.

Perhaps because of its balance of figural and architectural masses, *St. Paul Preaching at Athens* (fig. 17.59) became the most widely imitated of the cartoons. St. Paul, raising his hands, reminds his listeners of their altar to the

unknown God: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23). The statue of Mars to which Paul is referring is seen from the back. The Athenians listen, some with quiet conviction, others greatly disturbed. In the heavy-set soldier directly behind the preaching apostle, the features of Leo X can be recognized. The commanding figure of St. Paul is derived from Masaccio's St. Peter in the *Tribute Money*, *St. Peter Baptizing the Neophytes*, and the *Raising of the Son of Theophilus* (see figs. 8.9, 8.1, 8.16). The dramatic central group, their bodies twisted, the folds of their draperies agitated as by a storm, is one of the finest passages from **Raphael's later** period. The man and woman at the **lower right, like the** two *putti* at the left of the *Healing of the Lame Man,* **show** the style of Giulio Romano.

The architecture here is noteworthy. The **round temple** is a tribute to Bramante (see fig. 17.9), and **the unfinished** rusticated buildings recall the ground floor of **Bramante's** Palazzo Caprini (see fig. 17.19). The patterns of **the reced**ing arcade produce a kind of checkerboard of **light and** dark, an unexpected demonstration of Raphael's **interest** in geometry. The severe grandeur of the architecture **is**



17.58. RAPHAEL (design). *Conversion of St. Paul.* c. 1517–21. Wool and silk tapestry with silver-gilt threads, 16'2½" × 17'8½" (4.84 × 5.4 m). Pinacoteca, Musei Vaticani, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Leo X.
The tapestries were woven in Brussels in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst. One was completed by 1517 and a total of seven were completed in time to be hung in the Sistine Chapel for Christmas 1519. Three others must have arrived shortly before Leo's death in 1521, for the inventory made just after his death lists a total of ten tapestries. The cartoons were not returned to Italy after the pope's set of tapestries was woven, and they played an important role in bringing Italian High Renaissance art to northern Europe. Tapestries, being woven, are often somewhat irregular in shape, as is evident in our illustration.

17.59. RAPHAEL. *St. Paul Preaching at Athens*. 1515–16. Tapestry cartoon, watercolor over charcoal on paper, 11'3" × 14'6" (3.4 × 4.4 m). Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Commissioned by Pope Leo X Medici for the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel.

contrasted with shaggy, ivy-covered towers in the background that tell us more about Cinquecento Rome than they do about ancient Athens.

This expensive series of tapestries was one of the legacies of Pope Leo X. But when he died in 1521, the papacy was bankrupt and the tapestries had to be pawned to help pay for the gathering of cardinals required to elect his successor.

**LATER DEVELOPMENTS.** Many of Raphael's compositions gained wide currency in Europe through engravings by Marcantonio Raimondi (1487–1534), who worked exclusively for Raphael between about 1510 and the artist's death in 1520. Marcantonio had been inspired to take up the engraving technique when he saw and purchased prints by the German artist Albrecht Dürer, which he then studied and counterfeited, using Dürer's signature. (Dürer complained to the Signoria of Venice, who agreed that Marcantonio would not be allowed to use the signature in the future.) Marcantonio reproduced finished works by Raphael and also made prints after designs that were expressly produced to be engraved, as is the case with the *Judgment of Paris* (fig. 17.60), an elaborate interpretation that includes a number of characters beyond the required figures of Paris and the three goddesses. The composition of three figures seated on the ground to the right was the basis for Manet's 1863 *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, one of the nineteenth century's most controversial paintings.
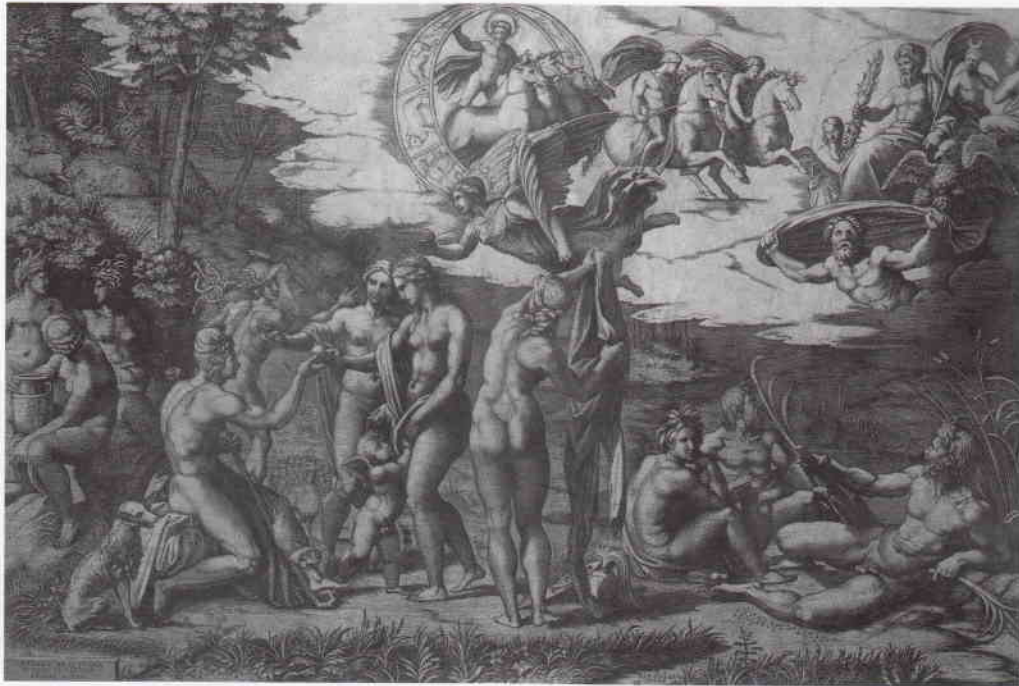
17.60. MARCANTONIO RAIMONDI, after RAPHAEL. *Judgment of Paris*. c. 1517–20. Engraving, 11½ × 17⅛" (29.2 × 43.4 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Gift of J. G. Russell Allen.

Vasari included a chapter on "Marcantonio and Other Engravers of Prints" in his *Vite*, in which he wrote that, "having arrived in Rome, [Marcantonio] engraved on copper a most lovely drawing by Raffaello da Urbino, wherein was the Roman Lucretia killing herself, which he executed with such diligence and in so beautiful a manner, that Raffaello, to whom it was straightway carried by some friends, began to think of publishing in engravings some designs of works by his hand, and then a drawing that he had formerly made of the Judgment of Paris, wherein, to please himself, he had drawn the Chariot of the Sun, the nymphs of the woods, those of the fountains, and those of the rivers …; and when he had made up his mind, these were engraved by Marc' Antonio in such a manner as amazed all Rome."

The prestige of Raphael during the nineteenth century was enormous and Manet must surely have enjoyed knowing that his critics were unaware of the source for his design.

Raphael's most ambitious architectural undertaking—except for St. Peter's, on which little was accomplished—was a villa designed for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici and known today as the Villa Madama (fig. 17.61). The original plan called for a two-towered façade facing St. Peter's, a circular courtyard, domed and porticoed rooms, displays of ancient and modern sculpture, gardens exploiting the slope of the hillside in descending levels, fountains and pseudo-rustic grottoes drawing upon the abundant springs in the area, as well as many delightful fantasies and inventions. The project continued after Raphael died in 1520, but the death of Pope Leo X in 1521 diverted Cardinal Giulio's attention to the problem of Medicean control of Florence. Even after his accession to the papacy as Clement VII in 1523, little more work was done on the villa.

The surviving fragment includes the great hall, which, with its single-story arches, groin vaults, and central dome, all opening out through arches to the garden, was a new

invention that gracefully harmonized the architectural space with nature outside. Its delicate stucco *grotteschi* and paintings were carried out after Raphael's death by his pupils Giulio Romano and Giovanni da Udine, and by his associate, the Sienese painter-architect Baldassare Peruzzi. The cardinal instructed the painters that he did not care what the subjects were, so long as they were recognizable and one would not have to add explanatory inscriptions, like the painter who wrote, "This is a horse." Ovid would do as well as anything else, the cardinal said, but the Old Testament was suitable only for the loggia of the pope. Much of the decoration includes Medicean symbols and motifs.

**THE TRANSFIGURATION.** Cardinal Giulio de' Medici also commissioned two large altarpieces from Raphael and Sebastiano del Piombo (c. 1485–1547), a Venetian artist who had moved to Rome and affiliated himself with Michelangelo. The two artists may have interpreted this as a kind of competition. Sebastiano turned for assistance to Michelangelo, who provided drawings for the

central figures of Christ and Lazarus in Sebastiano's *Raising of Lazarus* (fig. 17.62). Raphael may have decided to try to best Sebastiano by incorporating two sequential biblical scenes into his painting: the *Transfiguration of Christ and the Healing of the Boy Possessed by Demons* (fig. 17.63; Matthew 17:1–20).

Sebastiano's *Raising of Lazarus* demonstrates the kind of rhetorical High Renaissance narrative drama that devel-oped in the wake of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling frescoes and Raphael's works for the *stanze*. Christ's energy is implicit in both his bold *contrapposto* stance and his dramatic gestures: with his left hand he points com-pellingly toward Lazarus while with his right he seems to be drawing the man back into the world of the living. Lazarus responds by slowly pulling off the bands with which his body had been wrapped in the tomb. His



17.61. RAPHAEL. Medici Villa (now known as Villa Madama), Rome, interior. c. 1515–21 (decorations by Giulio Romano, Giovanni da Udine, and Baldassare Peruzzi). Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici.
The function of the villa, which is located on the slopes of Montemario outside the entrance to Rome from the north, was to serve as a residence for high-ranking visitors to the papal court. During Fascist renovations an inappropriate marble floor, seen here, was added.

vigorous physique is Michelangelesque. The pose and gesture of every figure was carefully studied to demonstrate the excitement that courses through the crowd in response to this unprecedented miracle.

While Sebastiano's painting offers a single, highly focused narrative event, in Raphael's altarpiece our eye moves from figure to figure as we try to take in two complex subjects. The story of the Transfiguration tells how Peter, James, and John accompanied Christ to the top of a high mountain. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared, Jesus' countenance shone with light, and his raiment became "white and glistening." Then they heard the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." While this scene had been represented by earlier artists, it was rare to show the subsequent event described in the Bible—the demoniac boy whom the apostles could

not cure in Christ's absence, but whom he healed on his return. Combining the two was unprecedented.

In the upper section Raphael convincingly represented the powerful drama inherent in the subject: the radiance of divinity and the wind of the spirit pull Christ upward, support the prophets, and momentarily blind the apostles with the intensity of revelation. Raphael's spiral movement sweeps through the figures: St. James is struck to the ground as if by lightning, St. Peter writhes in torment, and St. John is convulsed by divine energy, one hand groping in



17.62. SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO. *Raising of Lazarus.* 1517–19. Oil on canvas transferred from wood, 12'6" × 9'6" (3.81 × 2.896 m). National Gallery, London. Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici for the Cathedral of Narbonne, where he had become bishop in 1515.
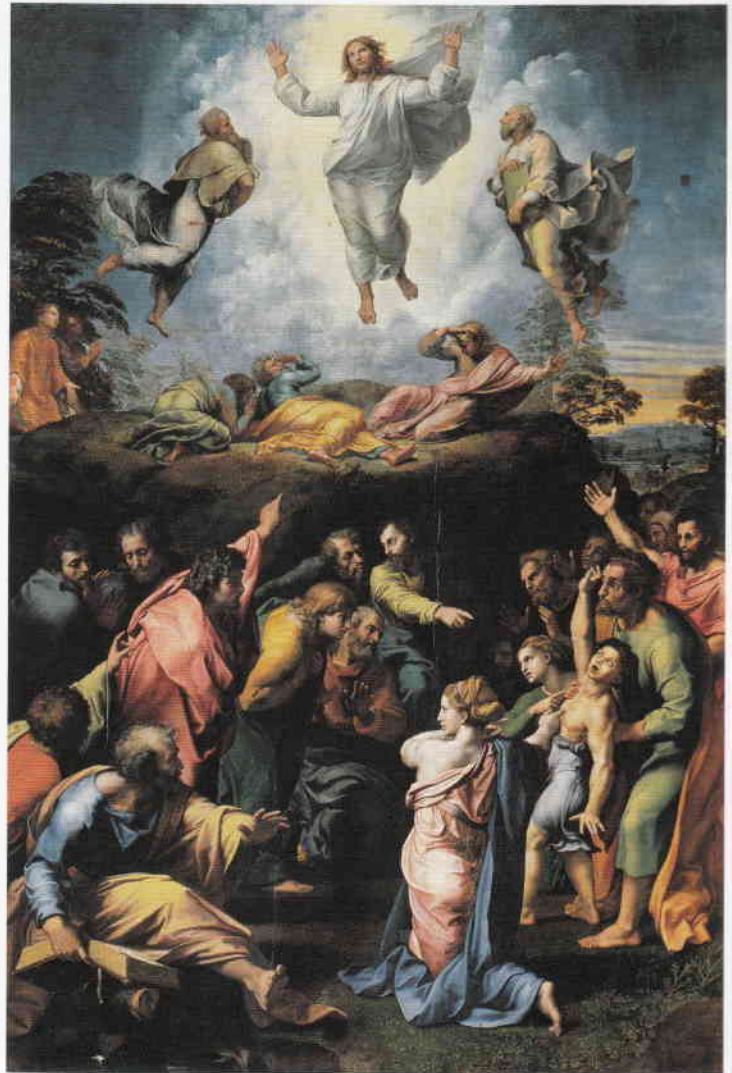


17.63. RAPHAEL. *Transfiguration of Christ and Healing of the Boy Possessed by Demons.* 1516–20. Panel, 13'4" × 9'2" (4 × 2.8 m). Pinacoteca, Musei Vaticani, Rome. Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici for the Cathedral of Narbonne. The cardinal sent a copy of Raphael's painting to Narbonne and kept the original for himself, later placing it on the high altar of S. Pietro in Montorio in Rome. Napoleonic troops stole the painting in 1797 and took it to Paris, but it was returned in 1816, after Napoleon's defeat.

the air, the other hiding his eyes from the light. Raphael here attempted to demonstrate what it might be like if the full force of God's power were to be experienced by humans. The different manner in which each of the three apostles responds to this revelation of divinity can be understood as yet another tribute to the Renaissance notion of individualism.

We might say that the picture was designed as a giant figure eight. The lower portion was partly executed by pupils, especially Giulio Romano, who did many of the preliminary figure drawings. The possessed boy and his family are typical of Giulio's style in their highly detailed execution, but the figure of St. Andrew at the lower left, turning from his book in amazement as the others argue or point, is not, and this group is surely by Raphael. The figure of St. Andrew, with his outstretched hand and his foot projecting through the picture plane, not to mention the intense contrasts of light and dark around him, would provide a vital model for the young Caravaggio in Rome seventy years later.

The coloristic brilliance of both Sebastiano's and Raphael's paintings demonstrates the impact of Michelangelo's new color scheme at the Sistine Chapel. The lower half of Raphael's painting displays intense reds, blues, yellows, greens, and pinks against the encompassing dark. In contrast, the color of the upper portion may again testify to an interest in Venetian art, but since every new influence Raphael adopted rapidly became his own, the blue and gold of Christ's garment are integral to the transfiguring radiance of the theme. Raphael may in fact have been responding here to the Venetian colorism of Sebastiano. The latter's painting, however, is unified by dark shadows in the manner pioneered by Leonardo da Vinci.

Raphael's interpretation of the Transfiguration theme may be related to his frequent attendance at the meetings of a group of priests and laymen called the Oratory of Divine Love. The goal of the movement was the reform of the Church from within, not by means of a monastic order, but through the parishes. The program was simple: common prayer and preaching, frequent Communion (which was a rarity at that time), and works of neighborly love. One of the founders, Giovanni Carafa, eventually became Pope Paul IV. Together with another co-founder, Gaetano da Thiene, later canonized as St. Cajetan, Carafa spread the doctrines of the group into northern Italy. Perhaps this quiet, self-effacing group provided a source for Raphael's mysticism. Gaetano was often prostrate in ecstasy for hours before the Eucharist—like Raphael's three apostles before the transfigured Christ—and he preferred to celebrate Mass only at an altar in a chapel where the already consecrated sacrament was reserved for the veneration of the faithful. In this way, he could obtain, as he put it, "greater light and heat."

On Good Friday, April 6, 1520, after a brief illness, Raphael died at the age of thirty-seven. At his request, the funeral was held in the Pantheon in Rome, with the unfinished *Transfiguration* hung above his bier, and he was subsequently buried there. Raphael's death was widely mourned, and with him passed that moment in Renaissance art when the ideals of classical antiquity and the aspirations of Christianity seem to have coexisted in harmony.

**THE VILLA FARNESINA.** Before he died, Raphael had participated with a number of other artists in one of the most delightful artistic undertakings of the Roman High Renaissance: the building of a palace, known to us today as the Villa Farnesina (fig. 17.64) because at a later date it was bought by the Farnese family and connected to the Palazzo Farnese by a bridge across the Tiber (see fig. 18.57). In use by autumn 1511, the palace was built for Agostino Chigi, a Sienese banker who established the headquarters of his far-flung financial empire in Rome, and who underwrote the conquests of Pope Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia, the ambitious projects of Julius II, and the pleasures of Leo X. From its very purpose—a retreat for Chigi's beloved Imperia, the most celebrated courtesan in Rome—down to the details of decoration and imagery, the palace is thoroughly pagan.

The Farnesina ensemble was coordinated by Raphael's Sienese associate, the architect and painter Baldassare Peruzzi (see p. 586). The plan, adopted from ancient Roman villas, is a rectangle with projecting wings opening onto gardens through a once-open loggia (fig. 17.65). The two stories are articulated with Tuscan pilasters. No balustrades or balconies alter this severity, but the walls were once decorated with delicate *sgraffito* ornamentation. Today only the modeled terra-cotta frieze crowning the second story hints at the decoration that once covered the villa.

The frescoes that embellish the interior are by many of the finest painters then working in Rome. Peruzzi, who carried out the cycles for two major rooms and most of a third, was joined by Sebastiano del Piombo, Sodoma, and Raphael, who brought several pupils, including Giulio Romano. Imperia died before she could enjoy many of the splendors of her villa, but Chigi consoled himself with Andreosia, by whom he had four children whom Leo X baptized before Chigi finally married her, with Leo officiating.

The great hall of the Farnesina, the Sala di Galatea (fig. 17.66), is lined with a cycle of frescoes unprecedented in the completeness of their ancient imagery. The gods and heroes turn up in surprising relationships that can be explained by their translation into their stellar and plane-

17.64. BALDASSARE PERUZZI. Villa Farnesina (originally Palazzo Chigi), Rome, garden façade. 1509–11. Commissioned by Agostino Chigi (see figs. 17.65–17.73).
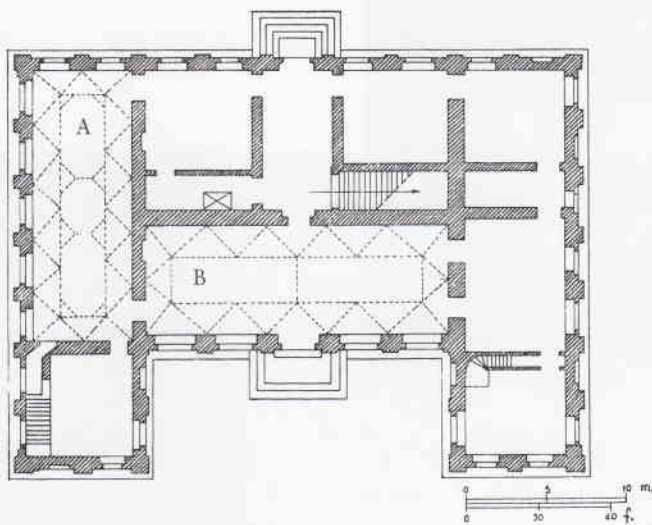


17.65. BALDASSARE PERUZZI. Plan of the ground floor of the Villa Farnesina, Rome. 1509–11.
A. Sala di Galatea.
B. Loggia of Psyche.

tary equivalents. The positions of these equivalents on the ceiling preserved the configuration of the heavens above central Italy on the night of December 1, 1466, the presumed birth date of the patron, whose horoscope is thus represented in the ceiling panels.

To embody this intellectual conceit, Peruzzi employed a pictorial style that is at once artificial, elegant, and beguiling. One of the two long central panels shows the constellation Perseus (fig. 17.67), with the hero about to decapitate Medusa, while winged Fame blows her trumpet in the direction of the Chigi arms, modeled in stucco in the center of the ceiling. This arrangement of figures in the foreground, silhouetted against a background of stars, displays the refinement of an ancient cameo; possibly it was inspired by one.

The walls of the Sala di Galatea were to be decorated by a variety of painters with frescoes representing divinities of earth and sea, but only Sebastiano del Piombo's *Polyphemus* (not illustrated) and Raphael's *Galatea* (fig. 17.68) were ever painted. According to Raphael's own account, he based his image of the sea nymph not on any single beautiful woman but on an idea of female perfection created by combining elements he had seen in various women. The vigorous *contrapposto* pose is based on Michelangelo's unfinished figure of St. Matthew (see fig. 16.41), of which Raphael had made a drawing.

Very little of Ovid's text on Galatea seems to have interested Raphael. He omitted Galatea's sixteen-year-old lover,

17.66. BALDASSARE PERUZZI. Ceiling frescoes. c. 1511. Sala di Galatea, Villa Farnesina, Rome.



17.67. BALDASSARE PERUZZI. *Perseus and Medusa*, detail of fig. 17.66.

Acis, whom Polyphemus was soon to destroy, and showed her in triumphant control of her own beauty, oblivious of the amorous gaze of the monster Polyphemus from the adjoining bay. Raphael had toyed with the idea of a Birth of Venus in an earlier drawing and retained from this subject the shell-chariot as represented by Botticelli (see fig. 13.24), to which, however, he added curious paddle wheels, apparently as stabilizers. Drawn by dolphins, the chariot is accompanied by a procession that includes tritons blowing a conch and a trumpet, sea horses, nereids, and sirens. Although the composition is centralized, the movement of the chariot from left to right is accented by

the movement of the winged *putto* in the foreground. The sunny light emphasizes the soft flesh tones of the female figures and the tanned musculature of the male torsos against the green water. The deep red cloak and golden hair of Galatea float rhythmically around and behind her.

After the grace of the *Galatea*, the sexual innuendos found in the work of Sodoma (1477?–1549) in the Farnesina bedroom come as something of a shock. In his *Marriage of Alexander and Roxana* (fig. 17.69), the relaxed bride sits on the edge of a gorgeous bed with posts of gilded Corinthian columns, while three *putti* disrobe her. Another tugs Alexander in her direction, serving maids

17.68. RAPHAEL. *Galatea*. 1513.
Fresco, 9'8" × 7'5" (2.9 × 2.3 m).
Sala di Galatea, Villa Farnesina, Rome.
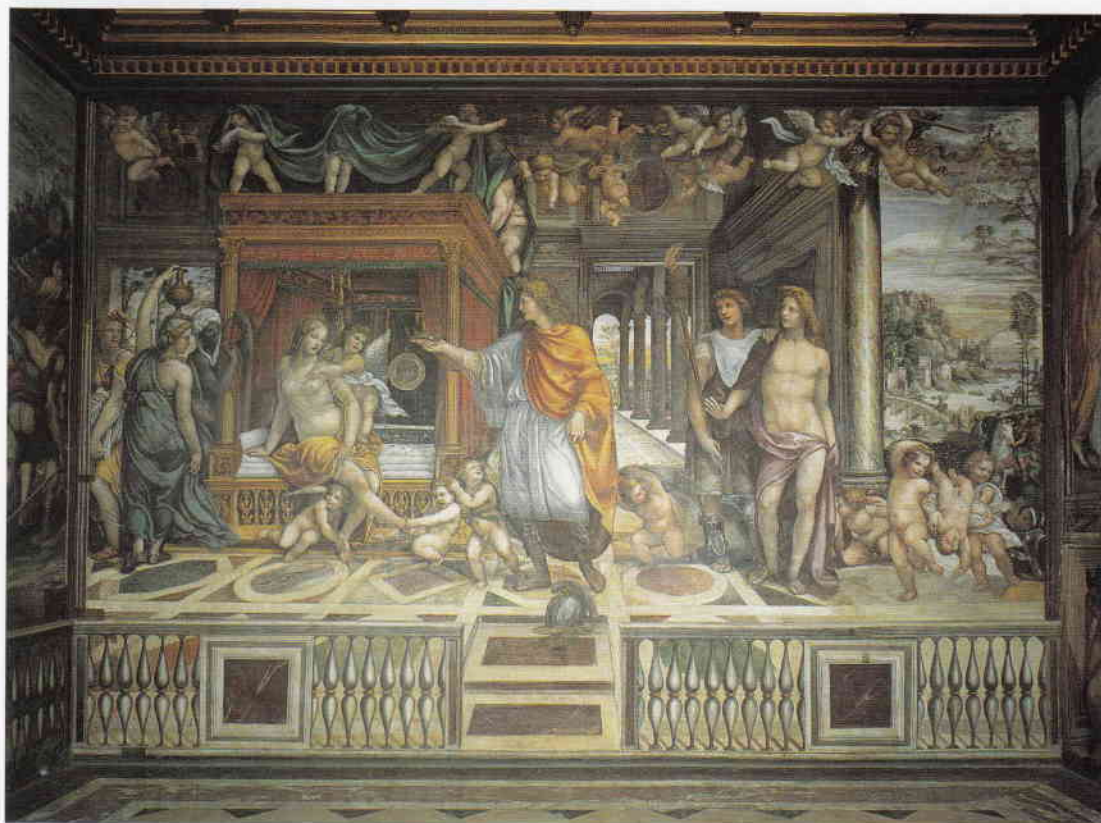


17.69. SODOMA.
*Marriage of Alexander
and Roxana*, c. 1517.
Fresco, 12'1" × 21'9"
(3.7 × 6.6 m). Bedroom,
second floor, Villa
Farnesina, Rome.

depart, and on the right the almost nude god of marriage, accompanied by a torchbearer, presides over the occasion. Luxurious in its surfaces and overripe in its coloring, this frankly voluptuous fresco is the opposite of the moralized mythologies of Botticelli. Yet it seems mild compared with the erotica soon to follow, popularized after Raphael's death by Giulio Romano and Marcantonio Raimondi.

In the Sala delle Prospettive (fig. 17.70) on the upper story, Peruzzi revived the perspective schemes of Melozzo and Mantegna, possibly directly influenced by their illusionistic works, which were still intact at the time (see figs. 14.24–14.25, 15.14, 15.25). The perspective was planned to function correctly when the observer stands toward the left of the room. The dark, veined marble piers of Peruzzi's frescoes and columns with gilded capitals incorporate the actual veined marble door frames of the room. The frescoed architecture is so precisely painted that it is almost impossible to distinguish where real marble ends and illusion begins. Through the lofty columns one looks out to a painted terrace that opens onto a continuous landscape.

The decoration of the Farnesina culminates in the series of frescoes painted by Raphael's pupils, from his sketches and under his direction but only occasionally with his direct intervention, in the Loggia of Psyche (figs. 17.71–17.72). Garlands of leaves, fruit, and flowers along the groins of the vaults and around the center of the ceiling transform the architecture into a delightful open bower. The episodes of the story of Cupid and Psyche are seen against a blue sky, as if through openings in the bower, while two central scenes suggest simulated tapestries stretched overhead. The effect of an open-air setting is countered by the tension of the bower's garlands and the light tug of the tapestry awnings. Within this graceful illusion only those incidents of the legend of Cupid and Psyche that took place in heaven are represented. Perhaps the others were to go on the walls, now filled by simulated architecture, or perhaps the cycle was restricted to these episodes.

Although the noble female figures of Raphael's mature imagination are sometimes weakened by his pupils' execution, those carried out by Giulio Romano, as in the *Cupid Pointing Out Psyche to the Three Graces* (fig. 17.73), are quite grand. The figures are full of the new, sculpturesque effects characteristic of Giulio as we have seen his style in



17.70. PERUZZI. Sala delle Prospettive, second floor, Villa Farnesina, Rome, perspective view. 1515–17.

17.71. RAPHAEL and assistants. Frescoes, Loggia of Psyche, Villa Farnesina, Rome. 1518–19.



17.73. RAPHAEL and GIULIO ROMANO. *Cupid Pointing Out Psyche to the Three Graces.* Compartment of ceiling, Loggia of Psyche.



17.72. RAPHAEL and assistants. *Psyche Received on Olympus.* Eastern half of ceiling, Loggia of Psyche.
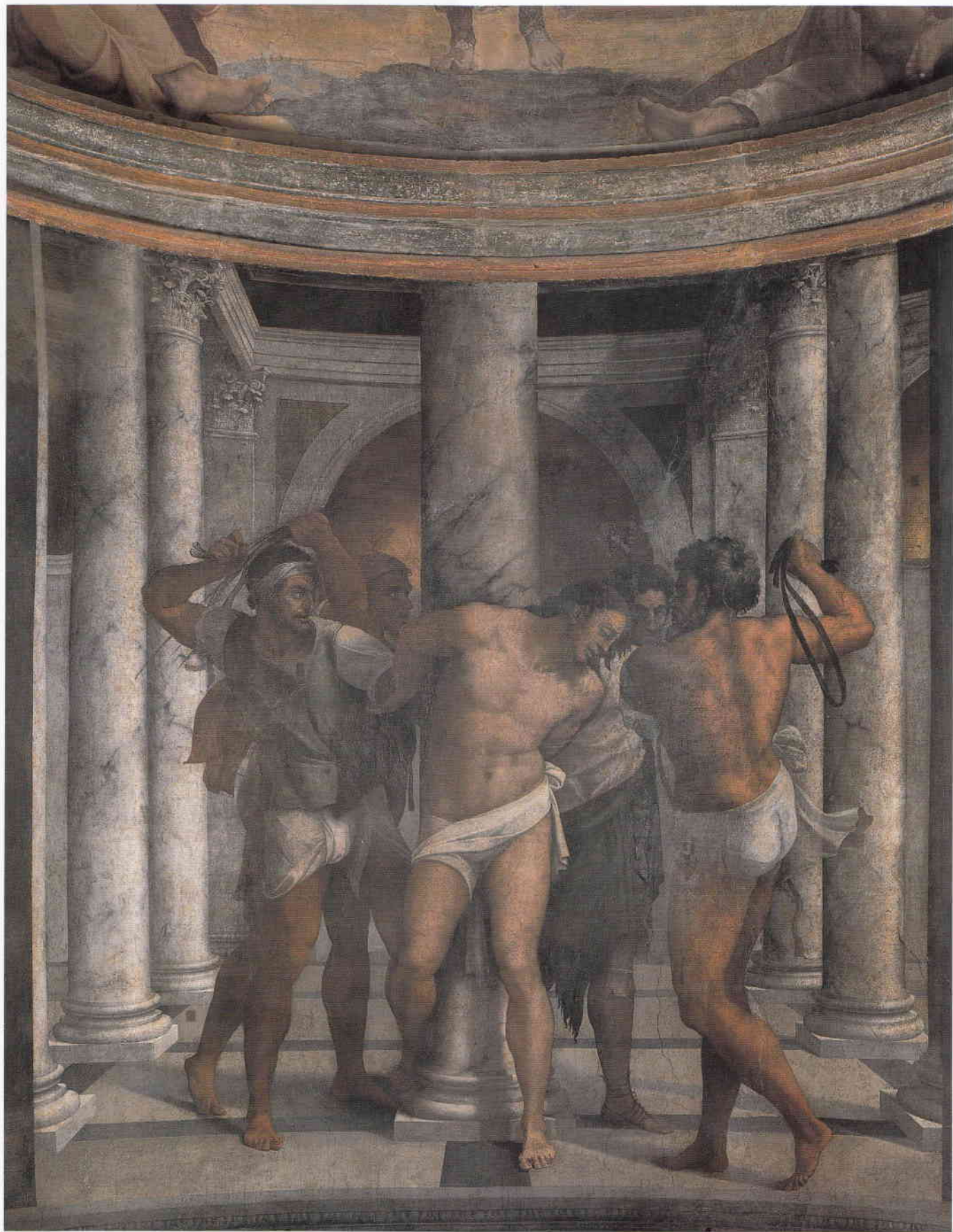
17.74. SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO. *Flagellation*. 1516–21. Fresco. Borgherini Chapel, S. Pietro in Montorio, Rome. Commissioned by Pierfrancesco Borgherini.

the *Transfiguration*. The unusual coloristic passages on the back of one of the Graces must have come from Raphael's brush, which doubtless intervened at crucial moments in works being painted by his pupils.

Within eight years of the completion of the last paintings in the Farnesina, Raphael, Chigi, and Leo X were in their tombs and the gracious and sophisticated world in which they moved had been swept out of existence by the violent Sack of Rome. Sebastiano del Piombo's *Flagellation* in San Pietro in Montorio (fig. 17.74), begun in 1516, admits us to a darker world of experience. Christ, based on a drawing that Sebastiano had requested from Michelangelo, is tied to a column that stretches outside the limits of the picture. The mural exploits the apsidal shape of the chapel, making the wall disappear and leaving the marmoreal Christ, painted with a mastery of anatomy, to be assailed by a pair of figures, one seen from the front, the other from the back. Sensitivity to such calculated compositional patterns will become more common in the course of the sixteenth century.

A majolica plate by Francesco Xanto Avelli da Rovigo (active 1530–1542; fig. 17.75) indicates the impact of the style of Michelangelo on domestic culture. The theme is taken from an obscure third-century text, *History of the World* by Marcus Junianus Justinus, book 27, as Francesco tells us in an inscription on the back that includes his signature and the date. While the reference is a learned one, it seems to be an excuse for the representation of heavily muscled figures in dramatic poses in the style of Michelangelo. The draped figure on the left, caught in movement with drapery fluttering, seems to be a reference to the works of Raphael. Of the two artists who seem to have influenced this work, it was Michelangelo who would have the greater impact on future developments, as we shall see.



17.75. FRANCESCO XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO. *Plate with the Sinking of the Fleet of Seleucus*, from the Pucci Service. 1532. Tin-glazed earthenware, diameter 10½" (26.5 cm). Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

The moor's head in the shield at the top reveals that this was part of a service commissioned by the Pucci family of Florence. It was common for elaborate majolica dinnerware such as this to be decorated with the family's coat of arms.

# NEW DEVELOPMENTS, c. 1520–50

The title of this chapter reveals that the High Renaissance style—idealized, grand, simplified, inspiring—did not last. By the third decade of the sixteenth century, artists were creating works that questioned or defied High Renaissance ideals. For many decades these and many other sixteenth-century works were grouped into a new style known as Mannerism, based on the Italian term *maniera*. The direct translation is "manner" in the sense of personal style, but the underlying suggestion is one of sophistication, artificiality, and refinement. The imposition of the term Mannerism for a diverse group of works created in various centers by different artists for unique patrons proved to be confusing, as did attempts to define subcategories within Mannerism, such as "Early Mannerism" and "the *maniera*." Mannerism ultimately became an overburdened term, with scholars unable to agree on its meaning or even which works were most characteristic of the style.

While Mannerism cannot be applied as a blanket identification to all the works created in Italy after the High Renaissance, there is no doubt that some of that art can be defined as "mannered" in the definition given above. While the artists who formulated the High Renaissance, like those of the Early Renaissance, had based their art on the study of nature—even Raphael pointed out that his ideal female figures were a compilation of features taken from his study of real women—many post-High Renaissance artists were more inspired by examples drawn from art than by nature. In many works there is a strong effect of artifice while in others elegance and sophistication are more important than naturalism. Such effects are especially common within the courtly cultures that flourished in sixteenth-century Italy. As we examine the works produced at this time, the discussion of whether a particular work is "mannered" will be undertaken when appropriate. The more general term "Mannerism" with a capital M will be avoided.

Given the dramatic and traumatic changes that were occurring on the Italian peninsula, it is not surprising that artists and patrons might have turned away from the High Renaissance style. The state of affairs in Florence was unfortunate and bound in time to grow worse. Since their expulsion in 1494, the Medici had been scheming to return, and their reinstatement in 1512 followed the sack of nearby Prato by Spanish troops under Pope Julius II and the expulsion of Piero Soderini, who fled into exile. While Julius II lived, the Medici ruled Florence again under the mild government of Giuliano, youngest brother of Cardinal Giovanni. Giuliano believed in control from behind the scenes, in the traditional manner of the Medici, leaving the framework of the republic externally intact. Giovanni's elevation to the papacy as Leo X in 1513, however, brought about a sharp change. He replaced Giuliano with their nephew Lorenzo, who entertained sterner ideas. In 1516 the pope, having driven out the rightful duke of Urbino, invested Lorenzo with the duchy. To the great distaste of the Florentines, Lorenzo maintained a ducal splendor in their midst and behaved as if he were duke of Florence. Leo X used Lorenzo as a pawn in his dynastic

*Opposite:* 18.1. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE ELDER. Madonna di S. Biagio, Montepulciano. 1518–34, 1564 (top of tower). Travertine (see figs. 18.54–18.55).

ambitions and married him to a French royal princess, but she died in childbirth in April 1519, and six days later Lorenzo followed her to an early grave. The direct male line of Cosimo de' Medici was thus extinct.

For four years, power in the Florentine state was exercised by Leo's cousin, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who presided over a now-sham republic. Two years after Leo X's death in 1521, Giulio himself became pope as Clement VII, continuing to control Florence. It was not long before the Florentines realized that under the Medici popes they had lost not only their internal liberties but also their external independence. From a position as one of the proudest of medieval republics and the founder of the idea of liberty in modern times, Florence had sunk to the status of a captive province of the papacy. Commercial activity stagnated and so did morale. Money and power were now centered in Rome.

## Michelangelo 1516 to 1533

In the midst of this discouraging picture, Michelangelo returned to Florence at the end of 1516 to carry out an important commission: Pope Leo X's project for the façade of San Lorenzo. This Medicean church had become an important symbol of dynastic power now that the head of the family was a duke, and became even more so once he

was allied with the royal family of France. In the year of his death, Giuliano da Sangallo, now well over seventy, had submitted several drawings of alternative projects for the façade. One (fig. 18.2) masked Brunelleschi's clerestory and the lateral chapels along the side aisles with a two-story temple, flanked by tall bell towers themselves topped by tiny cruciform temples ending in pyramids supporting orbs and crosses. A central pediment was surmounted by a colossal statue of the enthroned Leo X flanked by saints. The *campanili* recall those Bramante had designed for St. Peter's (see fig. 17.11), but while Bramante's upper stories narrowed gradually, Giuliano's did not. The details of Giuliano's severe Doric order imitated almost exactly an order he had drawn at the ancient Roman Basilica Emilia. This drawing for San Lorenzo was followed by Giuliano's younger brother Antonio when he designed the *campanili* and interior of the Madonna di San Biagio at Montepulciano (see figs. 18.1, 18.54–18.55) only a few years later. But Giuliano's grand design missed the point of High Renaissance composition because the effect of the whole was derived from multiple, superimposed elements rather than from the principle of unified dynamic growth that infused the architecture of Leonardo and Bramante.

The commission instead went to Michelangelo, who for three years worked on plans for the façade, which he intended, in his own words, to be a "mirror of architecture and sculpture of all Italy." His planned two-story structure was to include twelve standing figures in marble, six seated figures in bronze, and fifteen reliefs. Michelangelo spent many months quarrying the marble, first at Carrara, then at Seravezza, within the boundaries of the Florentine Republic. To reach the new quarries at Seravezza, he had to build a road through the mountains. Although we know all too little about the final projected appearance of the façade, the wooden model built to Michelangelo's specifications survives (fig. 18.3). Within its dense and compact structure of interlocking elements, the statues and reliefs would probably have jutted forth from the niches and frames, creating a dramatic interplay of masses and of lights and darks.



18.2. GIULIANO DA SANGALLO. Design for the façade of S. Lorenzo, Florence. 1516. Pen on paper, 22³⁄₄ × 25¹⁄₂" (58.1 × 64.5 cm). Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici on behalf of Pope Leo X de' Medici.

18.3. MICHELANGELO. Model for the façade of S. Lorenzo, Florence. 1517. Wood, 7' × 9'4" (2.1 × 2.8 m). Casa Buonarroti, Florence. Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici on behalf of Pope Leo X de' Medici. Michelangelo made several models for this project, one of which, smaller than this one, was presented to the patron for his approval. This larger version was made to be followed by the builders.

THE MEDICI CHAPEL. Suddenly, in March 1520, the contract for the façade was annulled and the marbles abandoned, to Michelangelo's indignation. The reason was the death of Lorenzo in May 1519, which deprived the façade of its principal *raison d'être*. The money was now needed for another project: a tomb chapel honoring four Medici—the two dukes, Lorenzo and Giuliano (Duke of Nemours, who had died in 1516), and the two brothers who may conveniently be called the Magnifici, Lorenzo the Magnificent (d. 1492) and Giuliano (murdered in 1478; see p. 297). Michelangelo was the architect from the start. The new chapel was built on the right side of the transept so that it would be in plan, if not in elevation, a pendant to Brunelleschi's earlier sacristy (see figs. 6.14–6.15), which had also been designed as a Medici burial site. Michelangelo's Medici Chapel is also sometimes known as the "New Sacristy."

The work progressed irregularly and was never completed. Some sculptures were not finished, others never started. Nevertheless, the Medici Chapel is Michelangelo's only architectural–sculptural project to be realized in anything approaching its entirety. The tombs and their sculptures must have been designed rapidly, because by April 1521 Michelangelo was in Carrara with measured drawings, ready to order the marble blocks. Letters and sketches indicate that at first a large, free-standing monu-

ment was planned that seems to have been inspired by the original plan for the tomb of Julius II (see fig. 17.20), with one tomb on each of its four sides. In the final arrangement, the two dukes were honored by wall tombs and the Magnifici were relegated to a third wall, under statues of the Madonna and saints Cosmas and Damian. This wall, seen facing us in figure 18.4, was never completed: the *Medici Madonna* (see fig. 18.7) was left unfinished, and the disappointing statues of the patron saints were eventually made by pupils.

During the pontificate of Pope Adrian VI—a pious and learned Dutchman who took the papacy from 1521 to 1523 between the two Medici popes, Leo and Clement—no marble was shipped. But early in 1524, a few months after the accession of Clement VII, the blocks began to arrive in Florence. By March 1526, four statues were almost finished and in June two more were begun and one was ready to start. Four river gods to be placed in front of the two wall tombs were never started, although we know something of them from drawings and a model. By June 1526, Clement's political machinations had led to hostilities between the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. In September, the Vatican and St. Peter's were attacked and plundered by the Ghibellines under Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, who had lost the papal election in 1523. In January 1527, the pope ordered the fortification of

18.4. MICHELANGELO. Medici Chapel, S. Lorenzo, Florence, view of interior. 1520–34. *Pietra serena*, marble, plaster. Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who later became Pope Clement VII. For the location, see fig. 6.14.

The Pantheon-like dome was originally ornamented in color by Giovanni da Udine, Raphael's specialist in decoration, but Clement had the decorations whitewashed.

Rome against the imperial forces. The terrible Sack of Rome began early in the morning of May 7, 1527. After months of unspeakable horror—looting, burning, rape, torture, murder, desecration—the pope, a prisoner in Castel Sant'Angelo since June, escaped and fled to Orvieto. Many statesmen, scholars, and members of the general populace felt that this humiliation revealed the judgment of God for the paganism of Medicean Rome. The tragedy marked the end of the High Renaissance in Rome.

In contemporary sources, four intertwined themes can be distinguished: a deep sense of collective guilt, a desire for punishment, a need for healing, and a longing for the restoration of order. Some of these themes can, however, be found before the Sack of Rome. Itinerant preachers had long predicted the ruin of the Church, and years earlier Machiavelli had declared that "the nearer people are to the Church of Rome … the less religious are they. And whoever examines the principles upon which that religion is founded and sees how widely different … its present

practices and application are, will judge that her ruin or chastisement is at hand…. The evil example of the court of Rome has destroyed all religion and piety in Italy."

Not until October 1528 was the pope able to return, poverty-stricken, to his burned-out and half-depopulated capital. Florence, meanwhile, had thrown off the Medici yoke for the third time and re-established the republic. But in 1530 Florence was captured by a combination of papal and imperial forces in an alliance that would force despotism on most of Italy. The new Medici governor of the city gave orders for Michelangelo's assassination because the artist had aided the republic in fortifying itself against invasion. The canon in charge of San Lorenzo hid the artist until the pope issued an order pardoning him so that he could continue work on the Medici Chapel. This proceeded in a desultory fashion, interrupted by the artist's trips to Rome. Aided by Emperor Charles V, Clement installed Alessandro de' Medici as the first hereditary duke of Florence. Alessandro, probably the illegitimate son of

Lorenzo, duke of Urbino, but widely believed to be the son of the pope himself, was known for his vices and cruelty. When the pope died in 1534, Michelangelo was in Rome and was unwilling to risk his life by returning to Alessandro's Florence. Not even after the duke's assassination in 1537 did he go back, and only in 1545 were the statues placed on the tombs by Michelangelo's pupils. Only the figures of the dukes were completed in every detail; the four statues of the Times of Day still show passages of rough marble.

For the architecture, Michelangelo used the Brunelleschian scheme but added an extra story, perhaps, in part, to raise the windows, the principal sources of illumination, above the neighboring housetops. Michelangelo repeated Brunelleschi's use of *pietra serena* articulation against white plaster walls, but then challenged that two-toned architecture by the intrusion of white marble architectural forms that are richly carved and polished. Ostensibly enclosed by the *pietra serena* yet refusing to rest easily within that framework, the white marble areas

include both the tombs and the flanking tabernacles above the doorways, which are of unprecedented shape and still-enigmatic purpose. These protrude so far beyond the *pietra serena* pilasters that they nearly meet at the corners, jutting in front of what now seem to be the imprisoned Corinthian capitals of the primary scheme. Through this architectural opposition, Michelangelo creates a sense of energy that makes this relatively small space somewhat claustrophobic in effect.

The sarcophagi of the dukes (figs. 18.5–18.6) have arched tops supporting reclining male and female figures representing Night and Day, Dawn and Dusk. The dukes, shown as young men in Roman armor, sit in niches in the second story. The often-heard criticism that the Times of Day appear to be slipping off the sarcophagi would be less justified if the river gods, intended to lie on a platform just off the floor, had been executed, for they would have completed a roughly circular composition. Michelangelo's figures often seem to be outgrowing their enclosures—think of the steady expansion in size of the population of
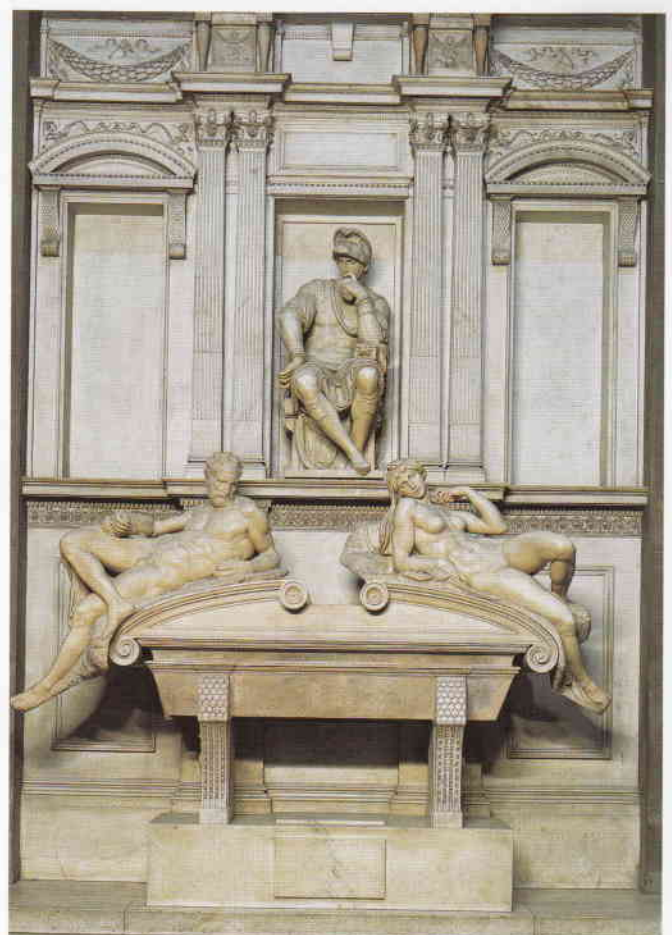


18.5, 18.6. MICHELANGELO. Tomb of Giuliano de' Medici (left), with allegorical figures of *Night* and *Day*. Tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici (right), with allegorical figures of *Dusk* and *Dawn*. 1520–34. Marble, height of seated figures approx. 5'10" and 5'8" (1.8 and 1.7 m). Medici Chapel, S. Lorenzo, Florence.

the Sistine Ceiling—and a study of the sketches for the ducal tombs shows how the size of the Times of Day gradually increased.

On a sheet of studies for architectural details in the chapel, Michelangelo wrote:

> The heavens and the earth, Night and Day, are speaking and saying, We have with our swift course brought to death the Duke Giuliano; it is just that he take vengeance upon us as he does, and the vengeance is this: that we having slain him, he thus dead has taken the light from us and with closed eyes has fastened ours so that they may shine forth no more upon the earth. What would he have done with us then while he lived?

Michelangelo did not follow his own notes literally, because the eyes of all the figures save those of *Night* are wide open. Under a sketch for the third wall, which was planned to contain the tombs of the Magnifici and the *Medici Madonna*, he wrote: "Fame holds the epitaphs in position; it goes neither forward nor backward for they are dead and their working is finished." That the ducal statues were not intended to be recognizable portraits of the bearded Medici dukes is shown by Michelangelo's words, recorded by a contemporary: "He did not take from the Duke Lorenzo nor from the Lord Giuliano the model just as nature had drawn and composed them, but he gave them a greatness, a proportion, a dignity ... which seemed to him would have brought them more praise, saying that a thousand years hence no one would be able to know that they were otherwise." Roman armor was appropriate to captains of the Roman Church, which the dukes were, and even more so to Roman patricians—a rank conferred on Lorenzo and Giuliano in a grandiose ceremony on the Capitoline Hill in 1513, complete with Roman trophies, Medici symbols, personifications of the rivers Tiber and Arno, and an altar at which Mass was celebrated.

The statues of the dukes—and the priest behind the altar—look toward the *Medici Madonna* (fig. 18.7), represented as the nursing Virgin—one of the most persistent motifs in Michelangelo's art (see fig. 16.33). Michelangelo characterizes *Dawn* as a youthful virgin and *Night*, whose abdomen and breasts suggest childbearing and lactation, as a mother. In the Virgin Mary these two states are united.

The Mass of the Dead, which in the late seventeenth century was still being celebrated in the chapel four times daily, is the central energizing principle of the chapel. It was probably intended that the priest could look up from the *Medici Madonna* to a fresco of the Resurrection in the lunette. Such an image would have been required by the dedication of the chapel to the Resurrection. A drawing by Michelangelo (fig. 18.8) corresponds approximately to the shape of the lunette and can be connected with no other commission. Christ here leaps from the tomb totally nude, as always in Michelangelo's Resurrection drawings.

Evidence suggests that frescoes of the Old Testament themes of the *Attack of the Fiery Serpents* and the *Delivery by the Brazen Serpent* (Numbers 21:6–9), for which an otherwise unexplained Michelangelo drawing survives, were to be placed over the ducal tombs. But in neither sketch does the Brazen Serpent itself appear, probably because it foretold the cross, and the crucifix on the altar would have fulfilled that function.

The river gods may have been intended to represent the rivers of paradise, or their significance may have been geographic. Vasari, who served as one of Michelangelo's assistants in the chapel, remembered that Michelangelo "wished all the parts of the world were there."



18.7. MICHELANGELO. *Medici Madonna*. Designed 1521; carved 1524–34. Marble, height 8'3½" (2.5 m). Medici Chapel, S. Lorenzo, Florence. See fig. 18.4.

The compositions of the two ducal tombs are opposites in subtle and significant ways. While *Giuliano* (see fig. 18.5) is characterized as open and relaxed, *Lorenzo* (see fig. 18.6) is closed, moody, self-contained, and deserving of his nickname, "Il Pensieroso" ("The Thinker"). *Giuliano* idly holds several coins, as if in intended largesse; *Lorenzo* plants his elbow on a closed money box, decorated with a fierce mask. Light plays freely on the face of *Giuliano*, but *Lorenzo*'s is shadowed by his helmet and half-hidden by his hand.

While related to some of the types and poses of the Sistine Ceiling, *Giuliano* and *Lorenzo* are less massive and energetic. A strange lassitude overcomes both, and it is perhaps worth remembering that, while at work on these statues, Michelangelo, then only in his late forties, wrote that he was already old, and that if he worked one day he had to rest four. Their shoulders slope, their muscles sag, their hands hang heavily. The face of *Giuliano* (fig. 18.9) is drained of the fire and conviction of, for example, the *David* (see fig. 16.1), or the prophets of the Sistine Ceiling (see fig. 17.28).

Although the Times of Day are muscular—the pulsating masses of *Day*'s back surpass any earlier male nude created by Michelangelo—they either writhe in helpless involvement with their own limbs or droop in weariness. *Day*'s face is merely blocked out, but in the rough surfaces of *Dusk*'s sad head some scholars have discerned Michelangelo's own disfigured face. The finished—or almost finished—female faces are strangely ornamental and, although in some ways unreal, nonetheless deeply poetic. *Night*, with her strongly Hellenic nose and not quite closed eyes, a star caught in the crescent of her diadem, seems to be dreaming fitfully of her lost children.



18.9. Head of Giuliano de Medici, detail of fig. 18.5.

18.10. MICHELANGELO. *Dawn.* From the Tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici. Designed 1521; carved 1524–34. Marble, length 6'9" (2.1 m). Medici Chapel, S. Lorenzo, Florence (see fig. 18.6).

*Dawn* (fig. 18.10), her knitted brows recalling the facial structure of the Italo-Byzantine Madonnas of the Duecento (see fig. 2.8), seems to be grieving over her childlessness. Michelangelo's mighty female forms were derived from male models. The breasts seen in the finished sculpture do not appear in the studies for the figure of *Night*. The shapes of thighs, shins, and ankles seem ornamental rather than naturalistic and carry the taut arcs of the sarcophagi into the figural masses.

The *Medici Madonna* (see fig. 18.7) was reshaped many times and cut down in the process; the lower portions reveal the original scale of the group. Although the deeply meditative face of the Virgin and the muscular body of the Child never received their final polish, Michelangelo's use of the three-toothed chisel gives these passages an atmospheric quality, as if seen through a veil of haze.

The total effect of the sculptures is disturbing, and so are the details of the ornament. Michelangelo cut away the original left arm of *Night* and started a new one, twisted behind her shoulder, to accommodate a leering mask, symbol of false dreams, that draws attention to the tiny, snarling masks of the frieze behind the Times of Day, suggesting that death is a nightmare from which we will

awaken. The architecture of the chapel, the mood of its statues, and its personalized decorative motifs had an immediate and profound effect on contemporary artists at work in Florence.

THE LAURENTIAN LIBRARY. While engaged in carving the statues for the Medici Chapel, Michelangelo was also developing radical new architectural forms. As early as June 1519, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici had been planning a library for San Lorenzo to house the Medicean collection of books and manuscripts. The commission for the structure was awarded to Michelangelo after Giulio became Pope Clement VII in November 1523. The Laurentian Library had to be constructed as a third story on top of the monastic buildings connected with San Lorenzo. Construction began in 1524 and stopped and started over the next ten years. In 1559 Michelangelo sent a model for the staircase from Rome, but he never saw the building as it appears today.

The tall, almost shaftlike entrance hall is startling (fig. 18.11). Instead of protruding to suggest a supportive function, the pairs of severe Tuscan columns on the lower level are recessed between sections of wall that jut aggressively

**18.11. MICHELANGELO.**
Entrance Hall, Laurentian Library,
S. Lorenzo, Florence. 1524–36,
1533–34, 1549–50; staircase 1559.
*Pietra serena*, plaster. Commissioned
by Pope Clement VII.

forward and are decorated with bold blank tabernacles. At the corners, where extra strength would be expected, the columns seem to be swallowed by the walls. The large consoles below each column are not supportive but purely sculptural. The bowed central steps of the massive staircase flow downward in forceful contrast to the flights of straight steps that flank them. Even today's tourists generally pause before ascending, and most choose the outer stairs rather than moving against the downward cascade of the central steps.

The tension that Michelangelo intended in his sequence of architectural spaces is evident when we move into the long reading room (fig. 18.12), which, after the verticality of the vestibule, has an unexpected horizontality. At first sight the reading room seems rather conventional. The wall is recessed behind the *pietra serena* pilasters and the tabernacles now frame windows that bring light in from both sides; such arbitrary elements as consoles with no supporting function and walls that challenge pilasters are avoided. What is disturbing, however, is that the room has

18.12. MICHELANGELO. Reading Room, Laurentian Library, S. Lorenzo, Florence. 1524–26, after 1530–33.

no reasonable focus or terminus. Pilasters, ceiling beams, and floor patterns combine to produce a repetitive series of bays—a cage of space in which the reading desks, also designed by Michelangelo, seem trapped and the observer with them. Since each of the bays is identical, the succes-



18.13. MICHELANGELO. *Plan for the triangular rare-book room of the Laurentian Library*. 1525–26. Pen and ink, 8³/₄ × 11" (22 × 28 cm). Casa Buonarroti, Florence.

sion could contain several more or less with no effect on this purely additive composition. The effect is impressive but it lacks the harmony of proportion established by Brunelleschi and Alberti as an important element in Renaissance architectural design.

Today we see the Laurentian Library without its crowning feature, which would have completed the sequence of contrasting spaces with a climax that might even be compared to the effect of Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Pit and the Pendulum" (1842). The parade of bays was to have led to one of the strangest spatial ideas of the Renaissance: a triangular room enclosing a maze of reading desks lit from concealed sources (fig. 18.13). The space available between pre-existing buildings was indeed triangular, but another artist of the period would probably have tried to fit a rectangle or a circle into the shape. Michelangelo made a virtue of necessity. Alas, this room was never built.

THE FINAL SCHEME FOR THE TOMB OF POPE JULIUS II. Since four more *Captives* (one of which is reproduced here; see fig. 18.16) and one *Victory* (see fig. 18.15) for the tomb of Julius II are preserved in Florence rather than in Rome, the reasonable assumption is that Michelangelo set to work on them in Florence after his Medicean commissions were suspended in 1526. The most troublesome of Julius's heirs, Francesco Maria della

Rovere, duke of Urbino, had recaptured the duchy after the death of Leo X and was an enemy of the Medici. As an ally of the Florentine Republic, he passed through Florence twice during this period, and it can be assumed that he used his presence there to bring pressure on Michelangelo to complete the tomb. The Florence *Captives* are larger than those in the Louvre (see figs. 17.42–17.43) but would certainly have been carved down, as was Michelangelo's practice.

A new proposal for Julius's tomb was formalized in a written contract in 1532. It called for a wall tomb (fig. 18.14) with the *Moses* on the upper story and the pope reclining on a sarcophagus. The meaning of the tomb had changed since the earlier projects, however, for the idea of resurrection had been discarded. The *Captives*, like Atlas figures, supported the cornice, straining under its enormous weight. The *Victory*, too, had changed its meaning,

for now the youthful figure was engaged in subduing rather than liberating a captive (fig. 18.15). This revival of the traditional Psychomachia theme (virtue victorious over vice) was perhaps a reflection of the newly liberated Florence. Niccolò Capponi, *gonfaloniere* of the republic, asked the Florentines in 1527: "Do you hold dear the conquering of your enemies? … Then conquer yourselves, put down wrath, let hatred go, put aside bitterness." Speaking of the Medici pope, prisoner in Castel Sant'Angelo, he warned: "Not the words that are said, ignominiously or



18.14. MICHELANGELO. Tomb of Pope Julius II, proposed reconstruction of project of 1532 with figs. 17.41 and 18.15–18.16 in place. Compare with the earlier versions of the tomb, figs. 17.20 and 17.40.



18.15. MICHELANGELO. *Victory*. 1527–28. Marble, height 8'6¾" (2.6 m). Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Commissioned for the tomb of Pope Julius II.

injuriously, against enemies, but the deeds that are done, prudently or valorously, give, won or lost, the victory." These words were delivered in the great hall of the Palazzo dei Priori, which may still have held the beginnings of Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina* (see fig. 16.42) and certainly showed Leonardo's unfinished *Battle of Anghiari* (see fig. 16.30), both commissioned when Florence was a republic. The following year, in the same place, Capponi pointed out that the Florentines triumphed without bloodshed, through the intervention of God: "To his divine Majesty, therefore, we have to lift the eyes of our mind, recognizing God alone as our King and Lord, hoping firmly in him, who has undertaken the protection of this city and state."

The *Victory* group is an important example of Michelangelo's use of the *figura serpentinata* and had an enormous impact on later sixteenth-century sculpture. It is now tilted somewhat forward; originally, the young hero looked upward toward heaven, harmonizing better with the architecture of the tomb and expressing a lofty dignity—a kind of soaring quality that was both aesthetic and moral in its significance. The victor is intent on communicating with divinity, as might a figure of Abraham or David. While the beard of the vanquished is largely uncut marble, elsewhere almost all the early stages of work with the toothed chisel have been completed. Michelangelo had largely finished the torso—yet another indication that he saw this part of the figure as the most crucial aspect of his visual and emotional conception. While *Victory* still expresses the vigorous musculature characteristic of Michelangelo's works, the emphasis on the figure's height, long limbs, and small head offers a new elegance. In addition, the composition of superimposed figures challenged later sixteenth-century sculptors to experiment with the problem of composing multifigural groups (see figs. 20.22, 20.29).

It is unrealistic to guess at the order planned for the four *Captives* (fig. 18.16) on the lower story of the tomb formalized in the 1532 contract. Only one is illustrated, but in all four Michelangelo's chief interest lay in the torsos, which are—from the front at least—fully developed with the toothed chisel and lack only surface finish. Sometimes an arm or a leg was brought to a similar level of finish, but never a head. The heads remained either roughed in or, as in figure 18.16, still encased in the block, save for features faintly visible on one side as through a dense cloud of marble. Sometimes the statues were started from two sides at once, sometimes from three, but in each case the back side of the quarried block seems to be still largely intact, giving us yet another insight into Michelangelo's working practice at this time. The muscles and skin heave, swell, subside, or shine silkily against the blocks of stone. What-
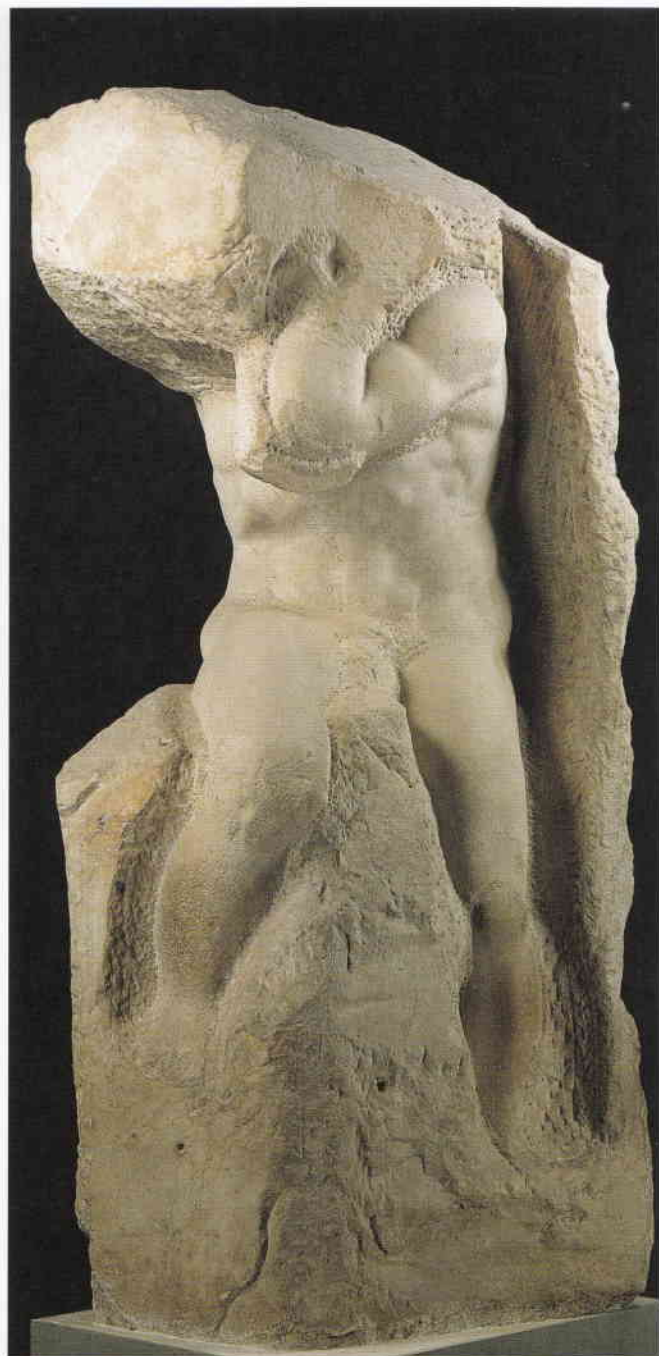


18.16. MICHELANGELO. *"Blockhead" Captive.* 1527–28. Marble, height 8'7½" (2.63 m). Accademia, Florence. Commissioned for the tomb of Pope Julius II.

ever might have been Michelangelo's conscious intent—he must have thought he would finish the statues—their present condition may help us to understand both essential aspects of his nature and the turmoil he must have felt during the years he was worked on them. To watch these giants struggle to free themselves from the surrounding marble has, for nearly five centuries, been a deeply moving experience for viewers.

## Andrea del Sarto

The absence of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael from Florence after 1508–9 left a clear field for other artists. One of these, Andrea del Sarto (1486–1530), seems to have been little affected by the disorders—artistic, historical, political—of the period. His early work contains echoes of Leonardo, Raphael, and Fra Bartolommeo, as is evident in his fresco of the *Birth of the Virgin* (fig. 18.17), which is located in the atrium of Santissima Annunziata near Baldovinetti's light-filled *Nativity* (see fig. 12.26).

Andrea's version might be interpreted as a High Renaissance commentary on Domenico del Ghirlandaio's fresco on the same subject (see fig. 13.39). The patrician interior reflects the architectural ideals of Giuliano da Sangallo (see pp. 309–12), and the massive figures, echoing those of Raphael's Stanza d'Eliodoro and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, are united by Andrea's use of curving rhythms. The deep shadows of the mature Raphael have also made their way to Florence, whose artists had generally been uninterested in Leonardo's mysterious *chiaroscuro*. The idea of representing angels on clouds above the bed canopy, joining the dancelike movement of the foreground

figures, was derived from a contemporary engraving by the German artist Albrecht Dürer. Joseph, in the center toward the back, is lifted in reverse from Raphael's portrait of Michelangelo in the *School of Athens* (see fig. 17.47). The incorporation of these motifs would have been understood at the time not as a lack of inventiveness but as an indication of Andrea's skill and creativity.

The *Madonna of the Harpies* (fig. 18.18) is a noble statement of the Florentine version of Roman grandeur. Vasari explained that Andrea painted the St. John the Evangelist on the Virgin's left from a clay model by Jacopo Sansovino (see pp. 641–42), but the inventor of the figure was Raphael, for Sansovino had merely reversed the philosopher holding a book, between Pythagoras and the portrait of Michelangelo, in the *School of Athens*. Since Raphael himself reused the same figure in the *Galatea* (see fig. 17.68), these borrowings show once again the lack of any sense of personal ownership among High Renaissance artists, and their willingness to reuse and refer to each other's figural motifs.

The influence of Michelangelo is evident in the majesty of Andrea's forms, in the severity of his architectural background, and in the sculptural roundness of his figures. But



18.17. ANDREA DEL SARTO. *Birth of the Virgin*. 1514. Fresco, 13'5½" × 11'4" (4 × 3.5 m). Atrium, SS. Annunziata, Florence.



18.18. ANDREA DEL SARTO. *Madonna of the Harpies*. 1517. Panel, 6'9½" × 5'10" (2 × 1.8 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned for the high altar of S. Francesco in Via Pentolini, Florence, by the abbess.

Andrea assimilated these various elements to create an altarpiece that is, in the best High Renaissance manner, unified by his personal sense of formal harmony and deep-toned color. Also characteristic is the melancholic sweetness seen in the expressions of St. Francis and the Virgin. The harpies who guard her throne are included not merely as references to ancient art, but also as leaders of souls to another world. The strong, simplified composition, the poise and counterpoise of masses, and the eloquence of figural style achieved by Andrea in this and other contemporary pictures made him the leading Florentine painter of the period.

In 1523, together with his wife, her daughter, and her sister, Andrea fled the plague, which had returned to Florence, for the country air of the Mugello. There, in 1524, in the village of Luco, he painted a moving image of the *Lamentation* (fig. 18.19). The dead Christ is upheld in a seated position by John the Evangelist, while the Virgin holds his hand and looks downward. Mary Magdalen, kneeling in prayer before the feet she once washed with her tears and dried with her hair, withdraws into meditation. This is not a historical representation of the narrative, for saints Peter and Paul appear at the sides, and St. Catherine

looks on quietly, her hands crossed on her chest. The dedication of the church in Luco to St. Peter and the fact that its abbess was called Catherine account for the presence of these two saints. Such ahistorical additions would have enhanced the painting's meaning for local worshippers. Christ's body is also presented mystically in the form of the sacrament, and the chalice stands in the center foreground, covered by the paten or plate on which the Host appears. The Eucharist draws the gaze of all the saints except John, who looks, as he was asked, toward Christ's mother.

Andrea's wife, stepdaughter, and sister-in-law posed for the Virgin, the Magdalen, and St. Catherine, and the town of Luco appears in the background in the evening light. Perhaps the intimacy of this family-style *Lamentation* can be explained by the arrival in Florentine territory of the quietist doctrines of the Oratory of Divine Love (see p. 534). The sacrament draws all to itself, and we are to forget the pathos of the darkened face of Christ as we contemplate his perpetuation in the shining wafer. Here grief is transformed into lyrical exaltation.

The face of Mary in Andrea's large *Assumption of the Virgin* (fig. 18.20) bears the features of the painter's wife. Light shines on the circle of saints, but then darkness closes



*Left:* 18.19. ANDREA DEL SARTO. *Lamentation.* 1524. Panel, 7'10" × 6'8" (2.4 × 2 m). Pitti Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Abbess Caterina di Tedaldo for the high altar of S. Pietro in Luco, near Florence.

*Opposite:* 18.20. ANDREA DEL SARTO. *Assumption of the Virgin.* 1526–29. Panel, 7'9" × 6'9" (2.36 × 2.05 m). Pitti Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Margherita Passerini for Sant'Antonio dei Servi, Cortona.

in and we glimpse part of a rocky cliff in the background. The altarpiece combines substance and dissolution, reality and vision, in a manner that suggests some of the developments of the Italian Baroque that would follow in the seventeenth century.

## Pontormo

Andrea del Sarto remained a High Renaissance painter even in his most mystical phase, but his pupil Jacopo Carucci da Pontormo (1494–1557) is one of the earliest artists to move away from those ideals. Vasari tells us that when Pontormo was eighteen he studied with Leonardo da Vinci, Piero di Cosimo, and Andrea del Sarto in succession. Vasari's discussion of Piero's life suggests that he was temperamentally closest to Piero, for the biographer emphasizes that in his later years Pontormo became a recluse, shutting himself away from the world in a studio accessible only by means of a ladder, which he could draw up after him. Even in his early works the strangeness of Pontormo's style is evident. In his *Visitation* (fig. 18.21) in the atrium of Santissima Annunziata, for example, Pontormo had already transformed High Renaissance principles. At first sight, his composition seems to exemplify High Renaissance symmetry, for the main incident is centralized and the figures are neatly arranged within the architectural setting. But then, instead of balancing the woman seated on the stairs at the left with a similar motif at the right, Pontormo breaks the symmetry by introducing a naked boy whose figure initiates an unexpected movement inward and upward along lines continued by the kneeling St. Elizabeth. The sometimes jarring color combinations, based on those established in Michelangelo's Sistine frescoes—Elizabeth wears a golden-yellow tunic with a sea-green outer sleeve and a violet inner sleeve—heighten the unconventional figural composition.

One wonders why the *Visitation*, which took place in front of Elizabeth's house, should be staged in a niche above a pyramid of steps. The setting draws attention to the apex of the arch where we see the Sacrifice of Isaac between chanting *putti* holding urns of flowers. The Sacrifice of Isaac was traditionally interpreted as a forerunner of that of Christ; here its juxtaposition with the Visitation converts the prenatal meeting of Christ and St. John the Baptist into a prophecy of their martyrdoms. Although the placement of the Isaac scene above the portal suggests that this is a sculptural group, this presumption is denied by the unexpectedly naturalistic color.

Pontormo's personal style is even more evident in his contributions to a series of paintings that were incorporated into the wainscoting of the nuptial chamber of Pierfrancesco Borgherini, a close friend of Michelangelo. This



18.21. PONTORMO. *Visitation.* 1514–16. Fresco, 12'10" × 11' (3.9 × 3.35 m). Atrium, SS. Annunziata, Florence. Commissioned by the Servites of SS. Annunziata.
For other frescoes in this series of the Life of the Virgin Mary, see figs. 18.17 and 18.27.

series representing the story of Joseph was ordered by Borgherini from Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, and two other painters. Pontormo's *Joseph in Egypt* (fig. 18.22) breaks with the High Renaissance in its crowds of nervous figures, statues pulsating on the tops of slender columns, uncertain and unprotected staircase spiraling to nowhere, broken and spasmodic rhythms, irrational light and space, and avoidance of centrality, symmetry, or any other form of unifying compositional device. The narrative is broken up into vignettes, some close to us, some far away, yet without any apparent connection. In addition, Pontormo created irrational jumps in scale, from Pharaoh's dream at the upper right, to the discovery of the cup in the center, to the reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers at the left. By avoiding the clear narratives of the High Renaissance, Pontormo forced us to search out the biblical story within a world full of unexpected details.

18.22. PONTORMO. *Joseph in Egypt.*
c. 1518. Panel, 38 × 43⅛" (96.5 × 109.5
cm). National Gallery, London.
Painted for the nuptial chamber of
Pierfrancesco Borgherini in the Palazzo
Borgherini, Florence (now Palazzo
Rosselli del Turco), an example of **High**
Renaissance architecture that still **stands**
in Borgo Santi Apostoli.

A surprising sense of terror runs through the picture.
The figures around a gigantic boulder in the center back-
ground seem transfixed, as if in a dream, by a power
beyond comprehension or control. They have been inter-
preted in terms of the brothers' lament: "Why shall we die
before thine eyes, both we and our land?" (Genesis 47:19).
The relevance of the scene and of this verse for contempo-
rary Florentines, well aware that they had lost both
freedom and independence, may be intentional. The Ger-
manic buildings in the background are derived from the
engravings of Albrecht Dürer. Vasari complained that Pon-
tormo had sacrificed Italian grace to Northern strangeness
in his figures as well. The anxious boy in contemporary
dress seated on the step in the foreground was identified by
Vasari as Pontormo's pupil and adopted son, the painter
Agnolo Tori, called Bronzino (see figs. 20.31–20.36).

A different mood is celebrated in the bucolic fresco Pon-
tormo painted, probably in 1520–21, for the Villa Medici
at Poggio a Caiano (fig. 18.23), built some forty years
earlier for Lorenzo the Magnificent (see fig. 12.20). Leo X,
who wanted the great hall decorated with classical sub-
jects, placed Cardinal Giulio in charge of the project at the
same time that the cardinal was watching over the progress
of Michelangelo's designs for the Medici Chapel. Andrea
del Sarto and others were commissioned to paint the side
walls and Pontormo the end walls, but at the death of Leo

in 1521 the work was interrupted and not resumed until
later in the century. Of Pontormo's share, only one lunette
was ever completed. Vasari wrote that the subject—
Vertumnus, Roman god of harvests, and Pomona, goddess
of fruit trees—was provided by the humanist Paolo Giovio.
Presuming that Vasari was correct, this is one of the rare
instances where we know the name of the person who con-
sulted with patron and artist on the choice and interpreta-
tion of subject matter. It is a reminder that undocumented
discussions between several parties may underlie many of
the works that we have been studying.

The motto "GLOVIS" in the roundel below the oculus
refers to Lorenzo de' Medici, duke of Urbino, who died in
1519. Read backward, it comes out "*si volg[e]*," or "it
turns," a reference to the reversals of fate that character-
ized the history of the Medici. The inscription in the car-
touche above the oculus is taken from Virgil's *Georgics* (I,
21), in which the gods are depicted in bucolic activities—a
suitable subject for a country villa. Vertumnus and
Pomona are united by the garland of fruits and vegetables
under the window and by the laurel branches, symbols of
both Lorenzo and Apollo, that seem to grow from its
frame. While old Faunus, god of the woods, crouches in
the left corner, Vertumnus turns to gaze at the beautiful
figure of Apollo who, seated on the low wall in a strikingly
natural pose, reaches up to the laurel branches. Opposite

18.23. PONTORMO. *Vertumnus and Pomona*. Probably 1520–21. Fresco, 15 × 33' (4.6 × 10 m). Villa Medici, Poggio a Caiano. Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici. For a view of the Quattrocento villa, see fig. 12.20.

him, a clothed and chaste Diana holds a laurel branch. The content of Pontormo's lunette is close to that of an elegy that the poet Ariosto composed for Lorenzo.

The sunlit scene of this enchanted terrace is deceptive, for Pontormo's composition again challenges the unity and logic of the High Renaissance. Figures and vegetation are fixed within a web of delicate color and convoluted linear patterns. But while the compositional patterns offered by the placement of the figures and the disposition of their limbs have the carefully studied quality of the High Renaissance, the figures to the left of the oculus echoing and balancing those on the right, the internal logic of the scene is continuously called into question. The window frame becomes a base for the two uppermost *putti*, for example, while the ground is nonexistent, space is nowhere defined, the figures are poised on the horizontals as if balanced on wires, and the composition—on its three levels—is laced together largely by the laurel branches. Each figure at first appears relaxed, but a closer analysis reveals that

most of them seem to be tense and holding a slightly uncomfortable pose. And where in Renaissance art have we seen a front view of a stretching nude youth (a god, no less!) with his legs spread wide, above a dog with its back arched, stretching itself? The animal naturalism of such poses negates the idealism of the High Renaissance.

Pontormo's *Descent from the Cross*, the nucleus of a cycle of paintings for the Capponi family in their tiny chapel in Santa Felicita (figs. 18.24–18.25), is a work of poignancy and beauty. This painting was traditionally identified as an Entombment, but a preparatory drawing shows a ladder in the upper left where the cloud is found in the final painting, suggesting that the original intent was a Deposition. In the painting as executed, however, the exact moment remains unclear. There are no crosses, there is no tomb, and no demarcation separates earth from sky. Like Andrea del Sarto's *Lamentation*, this is a meditative picture, and the real subject might be said to be the Eucharist. Two unidentifiable youths carry the lifeless

18.24. PONTORMO. 1525–28. Capponi Chapel, Sta. Felicita, Florence. Commissioned by the Capponi family.
The fresco on the right wall is Pontormo's *Annunciation*, but the elaborate wall decoration between the figures of Gabriel and the Virgin Mary is a disruptive later addition, as is the stained-glass window. Pontormo originally frescoed the dome with a figure of God the Father, but this has been lost. The four pendentives feature bust-length figures of the Evangelists, three by Pontormo and one by his pupil Agnolo Bronzino.

body of Christ while two women tend to Mary, who stretches out one hand above his shining body. The wounds, already washed, are barely visible. The figures ascend in the mysterious space like a fountain in a Renaissance garden. Every motion is slow, dreamlike, unreal. At the top, St. John the Evangelist bends over, not through his own volition but as if carried by the now descending waters of the fountain and the arch of the frame, stretching out his hands toward the body. No one weeps. One senses the disorientation experienced by those who have suffered a great loss.

The colors here are again derived in part from the Sistine Ceiling, but the pinks, sharp greens, and pale but intense blues appear in improbable places, including what looks like the skin of the two youths but on inspection turns out to be tight-fitting leather jerkins. The effect is like colored lights playing over the fountain of figures. At the upper right, the young man with blond curls and beard, full lips, and wide, staring eyes has been identified as Pontormo himself. Such a face makes it easier to accept Vasari's story that Pontormo walled up the chapel for three years and let no one enter while he painted so private a testament.

After he completed the Capponi Chapel, Pontormo seems to have become morose and introverted. His *Last Judgment* frescoes (1546–51) for the chancel of San Lorenzo were destroyed in a later remodeling of the

18.25. PONTORMO. *Descent from the Cross.* 1525–28. Panel, 10'3" × 6'4" (3.13 × 1.92 m). 🏛 Capponi Chapel, Sta. Felicita, Florence (see fig. 18.24). The frame is original.

building. In one of the drawings (fig. 18.26) the autonomy of individual figures is overwhelmed by a flowing movement that surges across the composition. The softness of the red chalk helps to create the sense of wavelike fluidity so appropriate for this subject.

## Rosso Fiorentino

Equally unique is the work of Pontormo's contemporary Giovanni Battista di Jacopo, who is known to us by his nickname of Rosso Fiorentino ("The Redheaded Florentine"; 1495–1540). Rosso's *Assumption of the Virgin* (fig. 18.27) in the atrium of Santissima Annunziata is found near works by Baldovinetti, Andrea del Sarto, and Pontormo. The foreground is crowded with the apostles, shown wall-to-wall with no landscape background. Their massive cloaks collide, one draping over the edge of the frame into the spectator's space. The Virgin—enclosed within a ring of smiling *putti*, whose arms and clasped hands make a continuous circle in depth, their feet flying out as the ring revolves—is shown ascending so quickly that she will soon be out of view. All this takes place to the music of a lute and flute played by angels below the Virgin's feet. To cap the climax, the *putti* have tied in knots the sash that Mary customarily drops to St. Thomas tie it in knots and seem to be teasing him by dangling it in front of his nose! A close inspection reveals the strange and even disturbing expressions of some of the apostles. Rosso seems to have been determined to defy High Renaissance decorum in order to enliven this often-represented subject.



18.27. ROSSO FIORENTINO. *Assumption of the Virgin*. 1517. Fresco, 12'7" × 13' (3.85 × 3.95 m). Atrium, SS. Annunziata, Florence. Commissioned by the Servites of SS. Annunziata.

18.28. ROSSO FIORENTINO. *Descent from the Cross*. 1521. Panel, 13' × 6'6" (4 × 2 m). Pinacoteca, Volterra. Commissioned for the Chapel of the Compagnia della Croce di Giorno in the church of S. Francesco in Volterra.

Vasari wrote of pranks played by Rosso, especially the torments his pet monkey inflicted on the monks of Santa Croce, but Rosso's *Descent from the Cross* (fig. 18.28) demonstrates his ability to capture high tragedy. The figures stand out against the geometrical patterns of the cross and ladders, and all the forms are powerfully modeled by a low side light. There is no central focus; as in Pontormo's contemporary *Vertumnus and Pomona*, the composition is composed of shapes that seem to seek the frame rather than a central axis and, as in Pontormo, the figures assume poses of the utmost extension or are cramped in postures from which they cannot move freely. But there the resemblance stops. Rosso's muscle-bound figures seem hard, as if carved from wood, and their bodies and faces are formed of cubic shapes that relate to the planes of the cross and ladders. In the kneeling, stretching Magdalen under the cross, a knife-edge crease splits the figure into light and dark halves; to show that this is no accident, her belt is bent as it goes around the crease. John the Evangelist, turning away from the cross and covering his face with his hands, collapses into a bundle of cloth caught in the raking light. When we turn to the face of Christ, we find an unexpected smile, a kind of reassurance that another meaning for this event will become evident.

Rosso's *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro* (fig. 18.29) has a pink and blue color scheme that contrasts with its brutal subject. It makes sense only as a comment on Michelangelo's *Brazen Serpent* spandrel (see fig. 17.39). Moses, flailing away with his fists, creates the apex of an apparently conventional High Renaissance pyramid based on the prostrate Midianites. But the pyramid is disrupted by a ferocious Midianite at the upper left and a provocative daughter of Jethro at the upper right, her body partially covered by drapery that reveals more than it hides. The foreshortened figures become abstract planes of juxtaposed tone. Rosso fled from the horrors of the Sack of Rome and moved to France, where he and other Italian artists imported by King Francis I transformed French art.

## Perino del Vaga

The style of Piero Bonaccorsi, known as Perino del Vaga (1500/1–1547), differs sharply from that of Pontormo and Rosso, both of whom seemed intent on enlivening the High Renaissance by creating personal styles. Perino was employed in Raphael's workshop in Rome, and his work can be understood as a mannered extension of Raphael's last works, especially the *Transfiguration* (see fig. 17.63). After the Sack, Perino fled Rome to take refuge in Genoa.

Perino's *Adoration of the Child* (fig. 18.30) is a variant on the Nativity, although neither shed, manger, ox, ass, or shepherds are present. We have seen this subject before in Fra Filippo Lippi's *Adoration of the Infant Jesus* (see fig. 9.15), although the earlier version is less crowded with subsidiary saints. Of the six saints who surround Mary and the Child only one, Joseph, was present at his birth. Sebastian on the left and Roch on the right were protectors against the plague; John the Baptist (shown as an adult here, but traditionally only six months older than Christ), Catherine of Alexandria, and James the Greater were probably requested by the patrons. Perino's signature and the date 1534 appear on the foreshortened tablet in the foreground—a device borrowed from Albrecht Dürer. The Christ Child, whose pose is derived from one of Michelangelo's nudes in the Sistine Ceiling, looks and points toward John the Baptist. The languid, mannered grace and sensuous flesh of Sebastian, who toys with an arrow, contrast with the draperies concealing the female bodies. Acute preciosity and brilliance of color are combined with *chiaroscuro* derived from Raphael's latest works. A shaft of light at the upper right strikes a male figure from whose right hand dangles a slaughtered lamb, a symbol of Christ's



18.29. ROSSO FIORENTINO. *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro*. c. 1523. Canvas, 5'3" × 3'10½" (1.6 × 1.2 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Probably commissioned by Giovanni Bandini.

18.30. PERINO DEL VAGA. *Adoration of the Child*. 1534. Panel, transferred to canvas, 9'1¼" × 7'3⅛" (2.74 × 2.21 m). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Kress Collection). Commissioned by the Basadonne family for Sta. Maria della Consolazione, Genoa.

sacrifice. Unlike the works of Pontormo and Rosso, Perino's painting emphasizes elegance at the expense of the narrative content.

Perino's cycle of frescoes for the Palazzo del Principe in Genoa was painted around five years earlier, about 1529. The most surprising is the *Fall of the Giants* (fig. 18.31), an enormous ceiling painting. The subject, an invocation of political authority, invites comparison with Giulio Romano's illusionistic treatment of the same theme (see fig. 18.65). The choice of subject for both paintings may have been suggested by the arrival of Charles V in Italy in 1530. He landed in Genoa, where he was greeted with cries of "Long live the Emperor of the World!" Jupiter, whose face is almost identical with that of God the Father in the *Adoration of the Child*, reveals how the mythological and the religious were interrelated in the Renaissance. He brandishes his thunderbolt from the foreshortened circle of the zodiac, surrounded by Perino's typically



18.31. PERINO DEL VAGA. *Fall of the Giants*. Begun c. 1529. Fresco, approx. 21 × 30' (6.4 × 9.2 m). Palazzo del Principe, Genoa. Commissioned by the Doria family.

sensuous, mannered deities. Meanwhile, the rather weak giants pile up on the ground in dream-like attitudes, as if nerveless before the thundering king of the gods.

## Domenico Beccafumi

The Sienese Domenico Beccafumi (1485–1551) can be compared to Pontormo in the sensitivity, poetry, and careful craftsmanship of his pictures. The traditional Sienese delicacy of color and grace of line and surface continue in Beccafumi's paintings, but at high intensity. His *Stigmatization of St. Catherine* (fig. 18.32) might at first glance be taken for a High Renaissance work: its symmetrical format goes back to Perugino, the grand simplicity of the architecture is in keeping with Bramante's noble style, and the softening effects of the *chiaroscuro* recall

Leonardo's *sfumato*. And then differences appear. The shifting light on the floor patterns prevents any rational succession. The two foreground piers are so closely associated with the flanking St. Benedict and St. Jerome that architecture and flesh seem to merge, the folds of the saints' habits suggesting less the shapes of their bodies underneath than the verticals of the piers behind them. The arches, pendentives, and vaults (in Italian *vele*, or veils) become veils or curtains upheld by *putti* that dissolve to admit the apparition of the Virgin and Child. The clouds blend into the ground mists floating upward from the valleys of the landscape.

A High Renaissance artist would have placed the main figure in the center, but Beccafumi shows St. Catherine kneeling on the left. Awaiting the stigmata, she raises her hands in a manner that continues the orthogonals of the



18.32. DOMENICO BECCAFUMI.
*Stigmatization of St. Catherine.* c. 1518.
Panel, 6'8³/₄" × 5'1¹/₂" (2 × 1.56 m).
Pinacoteca, Siena. Commissioned for the
Benedictine Convent of Monte Oliveto,
near Siena.

cornices and the arms of the cross; thus lines that should recede into space are transformed into a diagonal in a single plane. Features are brilliantly modeled, but shadows are murky. Drapery masses shine like flames but, while the edges are clear enough, the exact shape of any fold is not. In the shadows we can discern St. Jerome's lion and St. Catherine's lily and book, as well as a sleeping nun who is not privileged to share in Catherine's experience. Beccafumi seems to be suggesting that all substance is an illusion, that earthly reality will vanish into the shadows and luminous mist. He transforms substance while simultaneously annihilating space.

Beccafumi's large *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (fig. 18.33), still unfinished, was apparently rejected by its patrons at the church of San Niccolò del Carmine, who then required Beccafumi to paint a second version that is still in the church (fig. 18.34). The problem may have been the representation of God the Father. In the first version, he seems to have been an afterthought. Half lost in the mist above St. Michael, his head is foreshortened and his arms are squeezed in along the curve of the arch. The picture would have been complete without him, and he is much less finished than Michael. Perhaps Beccafumi somehow misunderstood the requirements of the commission and



18.33. DOMENICO BECCAFUMI. *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (first version). c. 1524. Oil on panel, 11'4½" × 7'4" (3.5 × 2.2 m). Pinacoteca, Siena. Commissioned for the Church of S. Niccolò del Carmine, Siena.



18.34. DOMENICO BECCAFUMI. *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (second version). c. 1528. Oil on panel, 11'4½" × 7'4" (3.5 × 2.2 m). 🏛 Church of S. Niccolò del Carmine, Siena.
Of this picture Giorgio Vasari wrote: "The Sienese painter Baldassare Peruzzi never tired of praising this picture, and one day when I was passing through Siena, as I was looking at it with him, I myself was amazed at both the altarpiece and the five small stories in the predella, which are executed in tempera in a most judicious and beautiful manner."

neglected to figure God into his original composition. Another possibility is that the increasing threat of the Reformation and its criticism of the Catholic emphasis on saints led the monks to request that God, not traditionally represented in this scene, be added. Whatever the reason, the first version, with its rather spectral representation of God, was unacceptable. In the second, he is majestically enthroned, robed in a brilliant red, and adored by ranks of angels, dominating the event with appropriate authority.

Beccafumi also provided us with two different versions of hell. In the original version, all is chaos. St. Michael, his spread wings flickering with peacock eyes, brandishes his sword. In the clouds about him other angels flail away at the rebels. At the bottom of the picture, near the observer, hell opens. Nude fallen angels, mostly wingless now, twist and turn in agony, cry out, and lie on the ground writhing as the heat torments them. In a manner unprecedented in Italy, Beccafumi allowed us to look into the phosphorescent lights of hell. In his second version, the light effects are even more impressive. The terror of the fire is somewhat in the distance, seen through arches to left and right, but in the foreground center a sudden burst of fire illuminates a terrifying mouth, complete with curling tongue and broken teeth, and the foreshortened, grasping claw of a terrible monster.

When the second version was provided with a new marble frame in 1688, the five predella panels praised by Vasari became unnecessary. Three are lost, but two scenes from the legend of St. Michael survive (figs. 18.35–18.36). In what was probably the leftmost predella, Pope Gregory I is shown leading a procession during a sixth-century outbreak of the plague. As he crossed the Tiber he looked up to see, standing atop the Mausoleum of Hadrian, Michael, who then sheathed his sword to indicate that the epidemic—God's punishment for a sinful humanity—would be stopped. Henceforth the mausoleum became known as the Castel Sant'Angelo and a colossal statue of Michael was later placed on the top. The scene in the second surviving predella panel shows how a famous pilgrimage site, a cave on Mount Gargano in southern Italy, became sanctified to St. Michael. Here a hunter's arrow shot at a bull changed direction to hit the hunter, after which the archangel Michael appeared and asked that this spot be consecrated to him. A procession winds up the path to perform the consecration.

In these predelle, Beccafumi traded the oil he had used for the two versions of the altarpiece for the old-fashioned, less flexible medium of tempera. But he did not use the tempera in the traditional manner, building up deep effects of color with careful layers. Rather he applied the medium



18.35. DOMENICO BECCAFUMI. *The Appearance of St. Michael on the Castel Sant'Angelo.* c. 1528. Tempera on panel, 9 × 14¼" (22.9 × 36.2 cm). Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Commissioned for the church of S. Niccolò del Carmine, Siena.

18.36. DOMENICO BECCAFUMI. *The Miracle of St. Michael on Mt. Gargano.* c. 1528. Tempera on panel, $8^{7}/_{8} \times 14^{3}/_{8}$"
(22.5 × 36.5 cm). Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Commissioned for the church of S. Niccolò del Carmine, Siena.

loosely, almost like thin washes. Beccafumi also used the white highlights that were common in tempera painting. But why use tempera in such a novel manner? Beccafumi had recently visited Rome, where he may have seen the newly discovered ancient Roman frescoes in the Baths of Titus. His predella panels look less like earlier tempera works than they do these ancient frescoes; even the yellow-pink-green color scheme is reminiscent of these models.

## Properzia de' Rossi

The first four editions of this book contained no mention of the several women artists who worked during the Italian Renaissance. In this edition the works of four women artists are included: Properzia de' Rossi (see figs. 18.37–18.38), Sofonisba Anguissola (see figs. 19.37–19.38), Lavinia Fontana (see figs. 20.48–20.49), and Fede Galizia (see fig. 20.57). Perhaps the most remarkable thing about these women, all recognized in their own lifetimes, was that they were able to become artists at all. It was difficult for a woman to receive training during a period when new ideas about the importance of family emphasized that a woman's role was in the home, bearing and raising children and providing a wholesome environment for family life. In addition, it would have been considered inappropriate for a woman artist to represent the male nude figure—the most important way at the time for an artist to demonstrate skill and an understanding of the contributions of Michelangelo and Raphael. In addition, guild membership was traditionally restricted to men.

The only woman to receive her own biography in Vasari's *Lives* was the Bolognese artist Properzia de' Rossi (c. 1490–1529 or 1530). In addition, her likeness was memorialized in a woodcut portrait surrounded by a fashionable frame, complete with a double pediment, designed by Vasari (fig. 18.37). Each biography in the second edition of the *Lives* had such a portrait frontispiece, although a few of Vasari's frames were left empty because he was unable to locate a portrait of that particular artist. The frame used for Properzia's portrait is the one Vasari designed to be used for sculptors; the flaming lamps at the top are symbols of inspiration, while the allegorical figure of La Scultura, with mallet and chisel, vigorously carves a bearded head. This is appropriate, for Properzia's fame was as a sculptor. Unfortunately she died young. Among the few certain works by her hand is a marble relief for the Cathedral of Bologna representing the Old Testament story of the *Chastity of Joseph* (fig. 18.38).

Vasari pointed out that Properzia was especially famous for her miniaturized carvings on fruit stones such as peach pits. Eleven of these, carved front and back, are thought to survive in the Museo Civico in Bologna, where they are

view of cavorting *putti* in movement against the blue sky. Arches at the base of the pergola are painted as illusionistic niches filled with sculptures based on antique themes and models. Pairs of rams' heads adorned with beaded necklaces unify the decoration on the lowest level. These heads, some with witty or bemused expressions, support draped cloths holding golden plates and jugs. The lower walls, now bare, were probably decorated with tapestries, and elegant furniture would have completed the effect.

The iconographic program is obscure, but there are enough clues to tell us that those who designed it were erudite humanists. The figures that have been identified include Fortune, the Three Graces (see fig. 18.40), Tellus (the earth goddess), Juno (as a representation of Air), the Three Fates, Pan, and others. A drawing demonstrates that Correggio adapted motifs from ancient coins—a popular object for collection and study among humanists in Parma.

The Convent of San Paolo was unusual in that the abbess reported directly to the pope and was not under the control of the local bishop. In addition, it was the chosen nunnery for the unmarried daughters of the local aristocracy. This combination meant that the convent had an unusually liberal, intellectual, and sophisticated atmosphere. Some of the iconography has been connected to a quarrel the abbess had with the local bishop, who wanted to assert authority over the convent and clamp down on what he felt were abuses. While some iconographic details may have been intended to serve Giovanna's cause, the overall impression of the room is of a learned and artistic decorative totality.

From the start of Correggio's mature period, he seems to have chosen to substitute emotional principles for formal ones in unifying his compositions. No longer are the saints sedately balanced around a central Madonna figure, as in works by Giovanni Bellini and Raphael. Rather they are drawn together in unconventional compositions by the implication of emotional relationships. In the *Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome and Mary Magdalen* (fig. 18.41), Mary holds the Christ Child in the crook of her left arm. The Magdalen presses her cheek against his thigh, bringing one foot toward her lips. He caresses her mass of silken hair while looking at the book held by the aged St. Jerome as a youthful angel turns the pages. Behind this apparently spontaneous burst of mutual affection is a deeper message, for the Magdalen's angel displays her ointment jar, and the Magdalen herself was destined to wash the feet of the adult Christ with her tears and, after drying them with her hair, she anointed them with expensive perfume. Christ, meanwhile, for all his babyish expression, is conferring his blessing on Jerome's translation of the Bible from its ancient sources, which are represented by the scroll in the saint's hand.



18.41. CORREGGIO. *Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome and Mary Magdalen.* After 1523. Panel, 7'8½ × 4'7½" (2.35 × 1.41 m). Pinacoteca, Parma.

Commissioned by Briseide Colla, widow of Orazio Bergonzi, for Sant'Antonio, Parma. Vasari praised this painting: "In Sant'Antonio in Parma he painted a panel picture showing the Madonna and St. Mary Magdalene, with a boy nearby in the guise of a little angel, who is holding a book and smiling so naturally.... This work, which also contains a St. Jerome, is especially admired by other painters for its astonishing and beautiful coloring, and it is difficult to imagine anything better."

Human emotion and sacred purpose are thus blended in Correggio's art. His tumultuous shapes—tanned flesh, torrential hair, or cloth that flows like melting marble—are swept together by these two organizing principles into climaxes that seem both erotic and religious. One might say that it is love that makes Correggio's world go round. Sometimes his imagery remains on a level of delightful sweetness, unquestioning and childlike. He never seems to have been perplexed by the conflict between the two realms he so happily united. But his forms are so soft, his

light so melting, his surfaces so luscious, his people so irresistible, that it is unnecessary to question his joining of the two spheres. As far as we know, his religious paintings never fell victim to the strictures of the Council of Trent, which sternly forbade nudity and inappropriate details and interpretation in religious works.

Among Correggio's most famous works is his *Adoration of the Shepherds* or, as it is more generally called, *Holy Night* (fig. 18.42). In this work, St. Bridget's vision of the glowing Christ Child, represented in Gentile da Fabriano's predella a century earlier (see fig. 8.3), is united with Correggio's own energizing principle of love. Frederick Hartt once suggested that the resulting effect might be compared with the "light and heat" that St. Cajetan, who would

found the Theatine Order in this same decade, had sought in the Eucharist. In Correggio's painting, an incandescent baby, expertly foreshortened and lying on a bundle of wheat in reference to the Eucharist, illuminates Mary's sweetly smiling face, while the midwife draws back and raises her hand, as if to protect herself from the intensity of the unexpected radiance. The light also falls on two shepherds, the younger one looking up rapturously at his companion, and on the angels, who sweep in on a cloud, brilliantly foreshortened, as well as on the faces of Joseph and the ox and ass. In contrast, the hills, over which can be seen the first glimmer of dawn, are left in darkness.

Correggio's dome compositions opened up a whole new field of religious painting for painters of his own and later centuries. The earliest represents the *Vision of St. John the Evangelist* (fig. 18.43). Correggio seems to have taken as his point of departure Mantegna's Camera picta (see fig. 15.25). On clouds banked round the cornice, the apostles are seated in pairs, their poses recalling Sistine Ceiling nudes, while in the center Christ ascends into heaven.



18.42. CORREGGIO. *Adoration of the Shepherds (Holy Night)*. 1522. Panel, 8'5" × 6'2" (2.6 × 1.9 m). Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. Commissioned by Alberto Pratoneri for S. Prospero, Reggio Emilia. In 1640 the Este family, then dukes of Modena, took possession of this painting and carried it off to their palace, to the infinite sorrow of the inhabitants of Reggio Emilia; the parish priest inscribed its loss in San Prospero's register of the dead.



18.43. CORREGGIO. *Vision of St. John the Evangelist*. 1520–22. Dome fresco, greatest width 31'8" (9.65 m). S. Giovanni Evangelista, Parma.

The muscular power of the figures, who are supported by *putti* like those surrounding Michelangelo's figures of God on his flights through space, is also reminiscent of Sistine Chapel figures. The foreshortenings reveal a knowledge of Michelangelo's *Brazen Serpent* spandrel (see fig. 17.39), and the idea of representing a divine figure floating past an opening must have been suggested by the *Separation of Light from Darkness* (see fig. 17.35). But the handling of the forms shows Correggio's softer style, which lacks Michelangelo's tension and linear definition. Correggio gave us a surprising view of the ascending Christ from below, sharply foreshortened from an unconventional angle. To view the scene correctly, you must hold the illustration overhead.

Such foreshortened figures are plentiful in Correggio's frescoed dome of the Cathedral of Parma (figs. 18.44–18.45). The somewhat damaged composition, prototype of innumerable Baroque domes, shows the *Assumption of the Virgin*. The central figure is surrounded by a ring of figures who are for the most part nude. As we watch, this group seems to ascend, leaving the apostles below.

In Correggio's dome compositions we are dealing with rapture in the etymological sense of the word: the central figure is rapt—torn loose from earthly moorings—and carried upward as the spectator is intended to be, vicariously at least. Correggio's patrons seem to have realized that this same style would be appropriate for scenes of



18.44. CORREGGIO. *Assumption of the Virgin.* 1526–30. Dome fresco, diameter of base of dome 35'10" × 37'11" (10.9 × 11.6 m). Cathedral, Parma. Commissioned by the authorities of Parma Cathedral.

18.45. CORREGGIO. The Virgin Mary flanked by Adam and Eve, detail of *Assumption of the Virgin*, fig. 18.44.

18.46. CORREGGIO. *Jupiter and Ganymede.* Early 1530s. Canvas, $64^1/2 \times 28$" ($164 \times 71$ cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Commissioned by Federigo Gonzaga.



sexual seduction, as is evident in a series made for Federigo Gonzaga, first duke of Mantua, who intended to line a room in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua with the Loves of Jupiter—a far cry from Mantegna's chaste frescoes nearby (see fig. 15.25). Jupiter was a mythical ancestor of the Gonzaga family and, in his many amorous exploits, not unlike Federigo. In Correggio's *Jupiter and Ganymede* (fig. 18.46), Ganymede swings in the grip of Jupiter, disguised as a fierce eagle whose wings darken the air. Dazzlingly foreshortened, the boy Ganymede looks back toward the spectator with an expression that seems to combine fear and pleasure. Below the floating figure, mountains and valleys lead to the horizon. The boy's leave-taking is dramatized by the leap of his white dog, desperate at his master's departure.

*Jupiter and Io* (fig. 18.47) was equally daring. The jealousy of Jupiter's wife, Juno, forced her promiscuous husband to assume the guise of a cloud in order to seduce Io, a mortal maiden. Io sits in a pose familiar to us from Raphael's frescoes in the Farnesina (see fig. 17.73). Her head thrown back, she accepts the embrace of one huge, cloudy paw, as the face of Jupiter materializes from the cloud to plant a kiss on her lips. The contrast between the trembling warmth of Io's flesh and the mystery of the attack by the cold yet divine cloud increases the intensity of what is clearly a representation of sexual desire and climax, parallels that experienced by the saints in Correggio's altarpieces. The only contemporary artist who could rival Correggio in his ability to accept human sexuality as a subject for art at this time was Titian.

18.47. CORREGGIO. *Jupiter and Io.* Early 1530s. Canvas, 64½ × 28" (164 × 71 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Commissioned by Federigo Gonzaga.

## Parmigianino

Correggio's slightly younger contemporary in Parma, Francesco Mazzola, called Parmigianino (1503–1540), stands in strong contrast to Correggio's High Renaissance, even proto-Baroque style. Parmigianino introduced himself in his startling *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (fig. 18.48). Vasari, who knew the picture when it belonged to the letter writer and lampooner Pietro Aretino, wrote that Parmigianino painted it just before his departure for Rome in 1524, when he was twenty-one, to show



18.48. PARMIGIANINO. *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror.* 1524. Panel, diameter 9½" (24 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

his skill in "the subtleties of art." Fascinated by his own reflection in a barber's convex mirror, he decided to reproduce it exactly. He had a carpenter turn a wooden sphere on a lathe and saw off a section similar in size to a convex mirror. On this surface he painted himself looking outward with an air of utter detachment, "so beautiful," Vasari said, "that he seemed an angel rather than a man." His face is far enough back from the surface not to suffer distortion, but his hand and sleeve are enlarged, and the skylight of his studio and the opposite wall are both sharply curved.

In the High Renaissance, self-portraits are relatively rare but they began to proliferate in the 1520s. Some are revealing and even disturbing. Leonardo had called the mirror the "master of painters," and he asserted that painters' minds should resemble it because it "transforms itself into the color of that which it has as object, and is filled with as many likenesses as there are things before it." But he was not referring to a curved mirror, the effects of which he compared to the distortion made by moving water on objects seen through it. Parmigianino, however, delighted in these distortions.

The commission for Parmigianino's bravura *Vision of St. Jerome* (fig. 18.49) required the presence of the two saints in the lower part of the painting, but the artist chose to separate them, with the Baptist dominating the lower portion while Jerome is shown sleeping to suggest that the painting represents his vision. With an exaggerated gesture, John directs us to the Virgin and Child, who are

St. John the Baptist was the patron saint of Maria's father-in-law, while Jerome was chosen because of his connection with the legal profession, which was practiced by both her husband and his father. After the Sack of Rome, the painting was taken by the Bufalini to their palace in Città di Castello. The commission originally called for flanking panels of Joachim with Anna and the Conception of the Virgin, and this is probably the reason for the unusually narrow format.

foreshortened forms, and the tall, unusually proportioned figures are clearly mannered. In a darkness that veils any possibility of establishing spatial relationships, rays of light flash from the Madonna's head and shoulders like shards of ice.

Parmigianino's interest in elegant poses and gestures comes to the forefront in his *Madonna and Child with Angels*, now known as the *Madonna of the Long Neck* (fig. 18.50), which was commissioned in 1534 but left unfinished when the artist died in 1540. The Christ Child is asleep in a pose suggestive of death; his left arm hangs as in Michelangelo's Rome *Pietà* (see fig. 16.37), an appropriation that exposes Parmigianino's interest in quoting art rather than representing nature. At the left are five graceful figures: one holds a huge urn and looks up at the Virgin; another, possibly a self-portrait, gazes past us. The Virgin's body and neck are dramatically attenuated, and her forehead and glossy curls are adorned with ropes of pearls and an enormous ruby. Even more astonishing than her long neck, perhaps, is the length of her fingers. The manner in which her clinging dress reveals her breast shows Parmigianino challenging the decorum of the period. Whether or not the Christ Child's head was to remain bald is uncertain. Joseph was shaved while in prison and a tradition insists that Christ was too.

But even more disturbing than any of the figural representations is the incomplete column, smooth and polished but without a capital, that stands in the background. Its base reveals that the artist intended to represent a sharply receding temple portico. As in the works of Beccafumi, the illusion of space, which had been rational and geometric, is now full of disjunctures and ambiguities. The figure with a scroll at the base of the column represents St. Jerome, who turns toward the missing figure of St. Francis. The two saints were required by the commission: Francis was a reference to the patron's husband, while Jerome was important for female patrons because of his connection with the worship of the Virgin Mary.

floating in mid-air, a position that became popular for them in the sixteenth century. The pose of the Virgin and Child but not their levitation is based on a marble group of the same subject carved by Michelangelo and sent to Bruges in Flanders: Parmigianino could not have seen the work but his use of the position is another indication of how the masterworks of High Renaissance masters were known and adapted by later generations. The strained *figura serpentinata* pose of the Baptist, the emphasis on

18.50. PARMIGIANINO. *Madonna and Child with Angels and St. Jerome,* now popularly known as the *Madonna of the Long Neck.* 1534–40. Panel, 7'1" × 4'4" (2.19 × 1.35 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Elena Baiardi for her husband's funerary chapel in the Church of the Servites, Parma. Despite its unfinished state, the panel was placed on its altar in 1542.

The origin of the painting's nickname is evident, but it has been pointed out by Mary Vaccaro that the patron's father wrote Petrarchan poetry in which he praised a woman's neck as the most important indication of female beauty.

18.51. PARMIGIANINO. *Cupid Carving His Bow.* 1535. Panel, 53 × 25¾" (135 × 65.3 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Commissioned by Cavalier Baiardo.



Perhaps contemporary with the *Madonna of the Long Neck* is *Cupid Carving His Bow* (fig. 18.51), which was ordered by a private patron. The epicene youth turns his naked back to us yet twists his head to engage us as if we were co-conspirators. With one foot braced on books, apparently symbolizing love's triumph over reason, he carves his bow from a freshly cut sapling. A *putto* in the background screams in pain as his companion mischievously twists his chubby arm, trying to force his already burned hand back against Cupid's hot leg; the young god of love is evidently burning with passion. The central figure, drawn with fantastic linear precision in the contours, shimmering with reflected lights, is painted with a

mother-of-pearl surface that dazzled Peter Paul Rubens, who made a copy of this picture.

Parmigianino found an additional source of income by working with printmakers, creating original designs that could be reproduced and sold on the thriving print market. One of the most dramatic of these prints is *Diogenes*, a chiaroscuro woodcut made by Ugo da Carpi (d. c. 1525) after a drawing Parmigianino made explicitly for this purpose (fig. 18.52). Vasari credited Ugo with the development of the chiaroscuro woodcut, but the impetus seems to have come from northern Europe, where earlier examples are known. Ugo's example, however, is a brilliant demonstration of the possibilities of the technique, which requires several blocks—in this case, four—each printed using a different color. The different tones create the effect of chiaroscuro, hence the name of the technique.

Diogenes, the ancient philosopher who is said to have lived in a barrel, is shown almost nude while studying several large books. His complex pose demonstrates Parmigianino's skill at composing the figure, and, in combination with the drapery swirling around him, suggests



18.52. UGO DA CARPI. *Diogenes*, after PARMIGIANINO. 1527–30. Chiaroscuro woodcut, 5½ × 13½" (14.7 × 34.4 cm). Albertina, Vienna.

Diogenes' excitement over his study. The chicken is a witty visual reference to Plato, who is said to have defined man as a "featherless biped." The technique is so complex that it is hard to determine exactly what the individual blocks must have looked like, and the printing of each in perfect registration with the previous one must have been difficult. The combination of technical skill with intriguing subject must have made this print a possession prized by the connoisseurs of the period. The collaborative nature of this effort is revealed by the dual signatures of printmaker and designer on the book in the lower left, which Diogenes not very subtly indicates with his stick.

## Pordenone

A shocking contrast to the refined sensuality of the two painters of Parma is furnished by Giovanni Antonio de Sacchis (1483/84–1539), called Pordenone after the town of his birth in Friuli, a sub-Alpine region northeast of Venice. Among the early Cinquecento painters of northern Italy, Pordenone is surely the most startling. He seems to have been a person of unbridled ambition and few scruples. If the charges made in court were true, he hired a band of cutthroats to murder his brother Baldassare so that he could lay hands on their entire paternal inheritance. He shuttled back and forth throughout northern Italy and even to Genoa, producing altarpieces, organ panels, and frescoes with amazing speed. In 1516 he journeyed to Umbria for some fresco commissions, and it has been presumed that he also visited Rome; no visit is documented, however, and recent scholarship has questioned this assumption.

Brought up under diluted Venetian influences in the provinces, Pordenone somehow absorbed the latest achievements of Michelangelo and Raphael. He never fully detached himself from Friuli, though from 1528 on he was active in Venice and its environs, where he was esteemed for his frescoes on the outer walls of palaces and cloisters—exposed to the weather and thus doomed to ruin— and for his works in the Doge's Palace, destroyed in fires in 1574 and 1577. It is difficult to assess the effect of these lost works on Titian (see Chapter 19) and, more probably, on Tintoretto, of whose dramatic style Pordenone was a precursor. We must judge him now mostly by his surviving fresco cycles.

Pordenone's most powerful works are part of a Passion series in the Cathedral of Cremona. A cycle of the life of Christ had been begun by local Cremonese painters and continued by Romanino of Brescia. Pordenone's scenes on the nave arcade, which include a disturbing *Nailing of Christ to the Cross*, culminate in his enormous representation of the *Crucifixion* (fig. 18.53) on the interior west

18.53. PORDENONE. *Crucifixion.* 1521. Fresco, c. 29 × 39' (c. 9 × 12 m). Cathedral, Cremona. Commissioned by the *massari*, the three annually elected patrician citizens who led the group in charge of the cathedral and its decoration (the *fabbricieri*). Pordenone seems to have painted this large fresco between May and October of 1521.

wall, where the Last Judgment is usually represented (see fig. 3.1). Christ's cross is thrust off center and all three crosses are unexpectedly set at diagonals, a compositional device derived from northern art. The cross of the unrepentant thief is truncated by the frame and is, remarkably, seen from behind; this placement and the violence with which the soldier breaks the struggling thief's legs produces a powerfully dramatic effect. To the left, the converted thief also struggles, but in an attempt to be closer to the object of his devotion, the figure of Christ. As the Virgin Mary collapses, her friends rush to her side. Adding drama above are the billowing clouds that try to hide the sun (Luke 23:45: "And the sun was darkened").

The center of the composition is dominated by a figure holding a gigantic sword. Following the logic required by Renaissance perspective, he is even larger than Christ. His dramatic gesture towards Christ suggests that he is the centurion who was converted at the moment of the Christ's death (Matthew 27:54). In the years 1515–21, when these frescoes were being painted, Cremona was occupied by the French, and foreign mercenary soldiers were often housed in the city and nearby countryside. The figure of a soldier would, therefore, have been a familiar one to the citizens, who could have identified both with him and with the

event to which he directs their attention. The violent movement that encompasses the main figures can be explained in part by Pordenone's adherence to St. Matthew's statement that "the earth did quake and the rocks rent" (27:51), as seen in the fissure in the right foreground and the frightened response of the horse, which has one foot over the abyss. The earthquake seems about to sunder the bad thief and the others on the right from Christ. Pordenone's fresco relies largely on physical effects to capture the drama and pathos of the Crucifixion in an effort to engage the local citizenry in the suffering and redemption that underlies the cycle as a whole.

## Antonio da Sangallo the Elder and the Younger

An influential architect working during this period was the Florentine Antonio da Sangallo (1455–1534), the younger brother of Giuliano (see fig. 18.2). He is now known as Antonio da Sangallo the Elder to distinguish him from his nephew, also named Antonio, whom we will discuss shortly. During his youth, Antonio the Elder was active as a military architect, and he also designed religious and

civic structures for minor centers. He was engaged, for example, to complete the church of Santa Maria del Calcinaio at Cortona, left unfinished at the death of Francesco di Giorgio (see figs. 14.11–14.13). When Giuliano died in 1516, Antonio was left in a position of prominence, and two years later he accepted one of the major commissions of the period: the pilgrimage church of the Madonna di San Biagio at Montepulciano (figs. 18.1, 18.54–18.55). The church was built to commemorate a miracle that took place on one of the slopes surrounding the city, and thus Antonio had a site in the midst of a magnificent landscape with no pre-existing constructions.

Antonio chose a Greek-cross plan crowned with a dome, similar to that of his brother Giuliano's Santa Maria delle Carceri at Prato, an unfinished commission he also inherited (see figs. 12.21–12.23). But he eschewed the typically Florentine surface of the latter, with its elegant marble incrustation and constructed his church of blocks of travertine that confer an unexpected massiveness. The main façade was to be flanked by free-standing towers, but only one was built.

The three cubic stories of the tower follow a canonical succession of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders. The octagonal fourth story was not built until 1564, and may or may not follow the original plans. Because only one tower was completed, some of the High Renaissance effect Antonio intended is dissipated, but it is not hard to imagine the tension that would have existed between the two massive verticals and the relatively planar façade.

The richly articulated tower has square corner piers with engaged columns. As a result the intervening wall spaces are sharply recessed and the entablatures broken. Giuliano had drawn a Roman Doric order almost identical to this one, including the square corner piers and the ornamented



18.54. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE ELDER. Plan of Madonna di S. Biagio, Montepulciano (see fig. 18.1). 1518–34.

necking band, from the ruins of the Basilica Emilia in Rome, and he utilized these motifs in his design for the façade of San Lorenzo in Florence (see fig. 18.2).

In what ways is the younger brother original, or did he merely adapt what might be called, after all, company property? Perhaps his originality lies in the new sense of drama, never present in Giuliano's work and never absent from that of Antonio. A struggle seems to be going on between the clustered column-and-pier at the corners of the *campanile* and the massive wall. The former is enlivened not by the more traditional windows favored by Giuliano, but by tabernacles capped on the second story with segmental pediments whose lower cornices are broken, a motif later used by Michelangelo. The jagged effect of the entablatures is heightened on the fourth story by corner obelisks. And even the raking cornices of the pediments of the three façades are broken against the sky. The dome, so impressive a feature of the building when seen from behind the apse, makes little impact behind the main façade, where it would have been outflanked by the towers.

The effect of the interior is overwhelming (fig. 18.55) not in terms of the definition of the space, which one would expect in the Brunelleschi-Alberti-Bramante tradition, but because of the impact of what seems to be brute mass. The accent is not on the walls but on the articulation of the corners—both recessed and jutting—which are treated almost as if they were the inner walls of the ground stories of the towers. The Roman Doric order is identical, inside and out, but these strong projections appear somewhat pugnacious when used on the interior. Because the inside walls are travertine, the supports are not visually separated from the walls in the traditional Florentine fashion. The barrel vaults, however, are covered in white *intonaco*, with the result that the ground floor seems to be supporting soaring arches against an expanse of white sky.

Montepulciano, a Cinquecento cultural center in spite of its small size, is lined with palaces by major architects, including several by or attributed to Antonio da Sangallo the Elder. The most original of these is the Palazzo Tarugi (fig. 18.56), which has two façades fronting on the principal piazza opposite the cathedral. Antonio made each façade roughly symmetrical, but he varied the articulation to introduce an open corner arcade on the ground floor and an open loggia, now closed, on the top floor. Convenient and delightful as these corner porches must have been for the inhabitants, who probably requested them, they violate the symmetry of the façades in spite of the heavy central arch. In a reversal of the traditional pattern, the lower order is Ionic, the upper Doric, and the Ionic columns of the ground story, perched on lofty podia, rise to embrace the *piano nobile* as well—an early example of
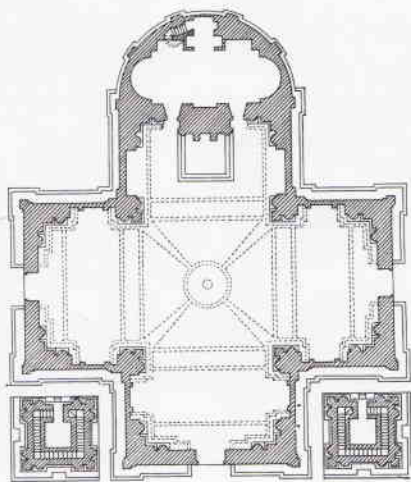
18.56. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE ELDER. Palazzo Tarugi, Montepulciano. c. 1515. Travertine.

the giant order later used by Michelangelo. No string-course separates the two first floors, so the windows of the *piano nobile* seem to be floating upward to bump against the balustrade that runs across the second floor. A comparison with Bramante's High Renaissance Palazzo Caprini (see fig. 17.19) demonstrates how the younger architect combined complexity and experimentation to create a new and novel type of palace façade.

The last member of the Sangallo family to concern us is Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1485–1546), nephew of Giuliano and Antonio the Elder. He was an imaginative architect whose two major undertakings came to grief at the hands of Michelangelo. Originally a carpenter responsible for the colossal centering needed to build Bramante's four arches to uphold the dome of St. Peter's, Antonio soon became an architect in his own right. In 1517, Alessandro Farnese (later Pope Paul III) acquired a palace in the center of Rome and decided to rebuild it from Antonio's designs. That it is the most majestic and influential of all Roman Renaissance palaces is due to the combined efforts of Antonio and Michelangelo.

Antonio's design was ambitious from the start, comprising an immense rectangle, its façade a towering block of masonry with rustication restricted to the corners and the central, arched entrance (figs. 18.57–18.58). Both the rows of applied pilasters, in what might be called the Alberti-Laurana tradition, and Bramante's engaged columns are replaced with regularly spaced windows enframed with columns and pediment—the so-called aedicula window. On the ground floor, Antonio adopted the "kneeling window" type (windows with consoles below) used by Michelangelo in 1517 at the Palazzo Medici (see figs. 6.23–6.24); here they are connected by a stringcourse that continues their sills. For the second-floor aediculae, Antonio used a Corinthian order, supported on high bases that rest on a stringcourse and unified by a smaller stringcourse at sill level, as on the ground story. The windows have alternating triangular and arched pediments, except for the central one, which was originally a large arch, repeating the motif of the entrance portal below. The third story is a combination of both lower ones, for while the columned aediculae now rest on consoles like those of the first floor, the windows are arched so that they break into the triangular pediments. All the architectural trim, including the massive quoins at the corners, is in stone set off against the flat surface of tan brick walls.



18.57. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE YOUNGER and MICHELANGELO. Palazzo Farnese, Rome. 1517–27, 1546–50. Brick, stone. Commissioned by Alessandro Farnese (later Pope Paul III; see fig. 19.21). For the palace's courtyard, see fig. 20.7.
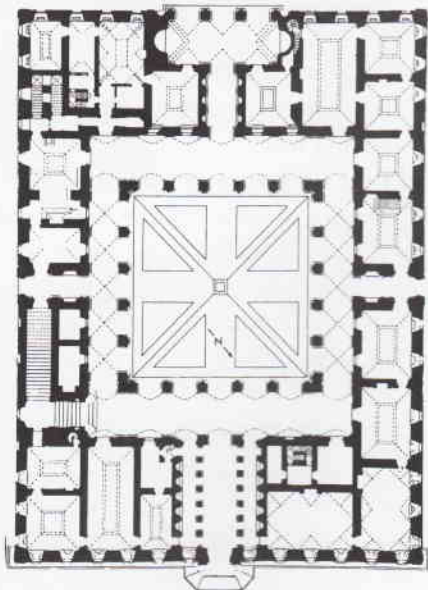
18.58. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE YOUNGER. Plan of Palazzo Farnese, Rome. 1517–27.

The grand effect of this façade depends largely on a single change made by Michelangelo. Antonio's cornice would probably have been narrow, more or less on the scale of the stringcourses between the stories, and the whole would have created a rather diffuse impression. Only the front wing of the palace had been carried out

before the Sack of Rome in 1527, and only, irregularly, through the level of the *piano nobile*. Not until 1539–40 did the patron, now Pope Paul III, resume the original design, with some internal changes, under the original architect. But in 1546, dissatisfied with Antonio's design for the cornice, the pope called in Sebastiano del Piombo, Perino del Vaga, Giorgio Vasari, and Michelangelo to provide competing designs. He accepted the colossal cornice by Michelangelo, which combines elements from various orders and is even heavier than that of the Palazzo Strozzi (see fig. 12.17); Antonio's walls had to be rebuilt in some places to provide an adequate foundation. According to Vasari's probably exaggerated account, such was Antonio's displeasure that he died of shock and grief.

Michelangelo's cornice imparts unity to the structure. A second alteration by Michelangelo also drew the elements of the building to a central focus: he eliminated the arch of the centralized opening on the second story and framed it with the second floor's Corinthian order in a column-pilaster-column grouping, allowing space for the insertion of the Farnese arms on enormous cartouches.

Antonio's three-aisled entrance (fig. 18.59) is a little basilica in itself, for the central aisle is barrel-vaulted, the narrow side aisles flat-roofed, and both are supported by a Roman Doric order. The low, almost cavernous effect is increased by the narrow entablature, which makes the ribs of the coffered vault seem to rise directly from the



18.59. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE YOUNGER. Entrance loggia, Palazzo Farnese, Rome. Begun before 1524.

columns. It must have been designed before Giulio Romano left for Mantua in 1524, because Giulio adapted the idea at the Palazzo del Tè. Antonio's courtyard would have been conventional, using the superimposed orders of the Colosseum, but, as we shall see, Michelangelo redesigned the third story to create a different effect (see fig. 20.7).

# Baldassare Peruzzi

Baldassare Peruzzi (1481–1536), one of the leaders of the High Renaissance (see figs. 17.64–17.67), left unity and simplicity behind in the extraordinary Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne in Rome (fig. 18.60). Built at a point where the once narrow street curved to follow the outline of the ancient Odeon of Domitian once on this site, the façade would have been visible only in segments as the observer walked by (today the widened street allows the complete view seen in our photograph). Peruzzi's design, like that of Vasari a generation later for the Uffizi in Florence (see fig. 20.41), takes advantage of a difficult setting; the sequence of supports as the spectator passed the palazzo—pilasters, single column, paired columns, entrance, paired columns, single column, pilasters—would have created an experience in time as well as in space. Peruzzi chose a Tuscan order deprived even of triglyphs so that the eye is led around the curved façade without interruption. From street level, the windows of the *piano nobile*, each on its broad podium, must have seemed to move around the bend in a solemn, regular rhythm, while the third and fourth stories float in the rusticated wall, their window frames decorated with moldings and scrolls.



18.60. **BALDASSARE PERUZZI.** Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne, Rome. Begun 1532. Travertine. Commissioned by Pietro, Luca, and Angelo Massimo.

# Giulio Romano

It is fitting to close with a fantastic structure: the Palazzo del Tè in Mantua, which Giulio Romano (c. 1499–1546), Raphael's pupil and heir, constructed and decorated from 1527 to 1534 for Federigo Gonzaga, a marquis who was made first duke of Mantua by the Hapsburg Emperor Charles V while the building was under way (and for whom Correggio painted his fresco cycle of the Loves of Jupiter; see figs. 18.46–18.47). The palace (figs. 18.61–18.62) is named for the area in which it is situated; the Tè is a peaceful island that connected the fortified city of Mantua—then surrounded entirely by lakes—with the mainland. Federigo established stables there for horse-breeding. The first project, possibly executed in 1526, added a frescoed banqueting hall to the stables, but this structure was soon expanded into a small country palace to be used for entertaining.

Charles V visited Mantua twice, in 1530 and 1532. Such events demanded that festival decorations be erected throughout the city and required Giulio Romano and his assistants to design pageants, costumes, and stage sets. On both visits Charles was entertained at Federigo's Palazzo del Tè. At an evening celebration held in his honor in 1530, for example, the palazzo was lit with many torches, and three hours of dancing, starting at 11, were followed by an elaborate supper.

Since the palazzo is really a country villa rather than a city palace, there was room for it to be low and long, with the main rooms on the ground floor, and servants' and store rooms on a shallow mezzanine above. Giulio united these two stories with unfluted pilasters in the rather severe Roman Doric order, probably derived from the ancient Basilica Emilia in Rome. A feeling of tension, however, is created by contrast between the restrained pilasters and the heavy rustication of windows and entrance arches (see fig. 18.61).

The articulation of the courtyard is even more unexpected (fig. 18.63). Engaged columns of great nobility have replaced the pilasters of the exterior. The stringcourse separating ground floor and mezzanine has vanished and blocks of various sizes, some more rusticated than others, fill the background. The niches are capped by pediments whose raking angles do not quite meet at the apex, as if they are being forced apart by the keystones below them, which are larger and more rusticated than the blocks that flank them. There is one more unexpected element here, for between every two columns, whether widely spaced or paired, the central triglyph drops down, leaving a blank hole above it. No Renaissance architect had ever broken the rules of ancient articulation so dramatically. Perhaps Giulio had noticed collapsing triglyphs in the tottering

18.61. GIULIO ROMANO. North façade, Palazzo del Tè, Mantua. 1527–34. Commissioned by Federigo Gonzaga.
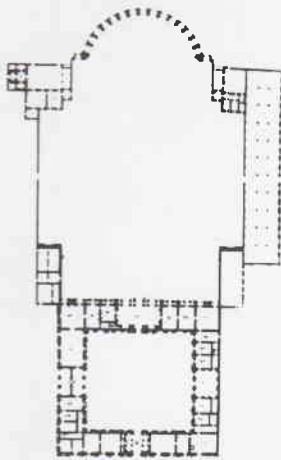


18.62. GIULIO ROMANO.
Plan of Palazzo del Tè.

ruins that surrounded his house in Rome (he was brought up next door to the Forum of Trajan) or at the Colosseum. At the Palazzo del Tè, however, he did not use this motif to create a picturesque, imitation ruin. It is too systematic for that, for it recurs at regular intervals.

On both exterior and interior of the Palazzo del Tè the elements of architecture seem to be battling with each other. The Renaissance harmony of forms has given in to a conflict that seems to originate in the forms themselves. The effect on the contemporary observer must have been dramatic. Giulio introduced novelty for its own sake into the history of architecture. His experiments have few heirs,

although some motifs were revived by the Post-Modern architects of the late twentieth century.

The interior of the Palazzo del Tè had rooms unmatched in their time for luxury and splendor. Now they are stripped of the furnishings mentioned in inventories, but the pictorial decoration, which Giulio and his pupils executed at breakneck speed, still survives. The story of Cupid and Psyche, which in the Villa Farnesina had been limited to its heavenly episodes (see figs. 17.71–17.73), is told in detail in the Sala di Psiche (fig. 18.64). The wedding feast covers two walls in a panorama of gods, nymphs, satyrs, and animals, while the wedding couple are shown reclining on an elaborate bed. Figures, mostly nude, are set against peacock-green foliage that is heightened by the silver and gold table service. One suspects that these vessels were matched with real ones when Charles V ate lunch alone in this room in 1530; Federigo did not dine with him but had the honor of holding his napkin.

In sharp contrast to the voluptuous wedding fresco is the fun-houselike decoration of the Sala dei Giganti (fig. 18.65), a room of the same size and shape as the Sala di Psiche at the opposite corner of the palace. The entire room, doors and all, was painted in a continuous representation of the destruction of the rebellious giants who had attempted to assault Mount Olympus as they are smote by thunderbolts from the hand of Jupiter. The palaces and caves of the colossal giants seem to collapse upon them—and upon us as we watch. There was once a rough fireplace which, when lit, suggested the consumption of the giants by flames. For those who had no idea

18.63. GIULIO ROMANO.
Courtyard, Palazzo del Tè.

what they were going to see, being ushered into this room must have been a high point in the entertainment offered at the palazzo.

These frescoes, painted in a hurry after the emperor's first visit in 1530 so that he could see them completed when he returned two years later, have been interpreted as an expression of feelings widespread among Italians. After the annihilation of so many values that had seemed permanent until the Reformation, the Sack of Rome, and other distressing events, many welcomed the new order of absolutism. The Renaissance values of individualism, moderation, and balance were being questioned.



18.64. GIULIO ROMANO. *Wedding Feast of Cupid and Psyche.* 1527–30. Fresco, Sala di Psiche, Palazzo del Tè, Mantua. Commissioned by Federigo Gonzaga.

Secular decorations in the palaces and villas of rulers were clearly made to impress important and not-so-important visitors. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V dined in this room when he visited Mantua in 1530, soon after the frescoes were completed.

18.65. GIULIO ROMANO. *The Gods on Mount Olympus and the Fall of the Giants.* 1530–32. Fresco. Sala dei Giganti, Palazzo del Tè, Mantua. Commissioned by Federigo Gonzaga. The dizzying floor pattern is not the original.

# HIGH AND LATE RENAISSANCE IN VENICE AND ON THE MAINLAND

I n 1511, Venice was flourishing as one of the leading centers for book publication in Europe. Like many cities that support the publication of books and build great libraries (see fig. 19.60), Venice was a center of lively debate and a crucible of new ideas. Among the many books published in Venice in 1511 were new editions of *De Architectura*, the treatise on architecture and engineering dedicated to the Emperor Augustus by its author, Vitruvius, and *Geography* by the ancient mathematician Ptolemy, with maps by Bernardus Sylvanus (fl. 1490–1511; fig. 19.2). The new view of the world that Sylvanus's maps offered Venetians and others must have been shocking, for recent explorations in the Americas and Asia had documented that the world was much larger and more complex than previously imagined. Although a Franciscan priest from north Italy had reached what is today Beijing by the 1220s, and Marco Polo, a young Venetian merchant, had traveled to the court of Kublai Khan later that same century, maps such as those of Sylvanus visually expressed the small scale of the Venetian empire within what must have seemed a new and challenging world. The excitement of living in a period of exploration and new discoveries must have been palpable in Venice at this time.

Several Venetian Quattrocento painters continued to be active into the early Cinquecento, including Vittore Carpaccio and Giovanni Bellini, who carried on creating compositions and innovative interpretations until his
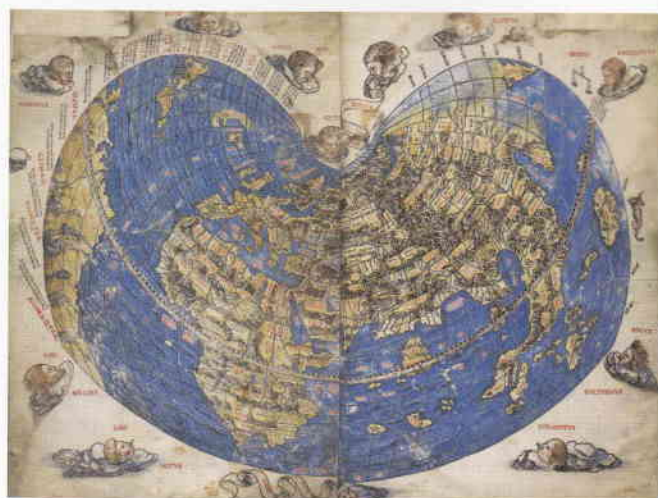


19.2. BERNARDUS SYLVANUS. *Ptolemaic World Map*. 1511. From *Ptholemei Alexandrini liber geographiae (Book of Geography by Claudius Ptolemaeus of Alexandria)*, printed by Jacopo Pencio, Venice. Black and red ink printed on vellum and hand-colored, $16^{6}/_{16} \times 22^{1}/_{4}$ " (41.5 × 56.5 cm). British Library, London (G.8176).

death in 1516. During the first decade of the new century, two innovative new painters appeared in Venice: Giorgione, who lived and worked only briefly, and Titian, who remained the single most important figure in Venetian painting until the last quarter of the century. About the middle of the century, the painters Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese made their appearance. Lorenzo Lotto

*Opposite:* 19.1. LORENZO LOTTO. *Annunciation*. c. 1534–35. Canvas, 5'5³⁄₈" × 3'8⁷⁄₈" (1.66 × 1.14 m). 🏛 Church of Sta. Maria sopra Mercanti, Recanati. Probably commissioned by the Confraternity of Sta. Maria sopra Mercanti.
Lotto's *Annunciation* is remarkably well preserved, perhaps because of its location in a rural church. Recanati is near Loreto, the site of the shrine of the Virgin's house (see p. 689).

carried the Venetian style from Lombardy to the Marches, the school of Ferrara fell under the spell of Venice and, after an important work by Titian arrived in Brescia, a new school arose in that Lombard city under Venetian influence.

Although Venetian art in the early Cinquecento radiates security and splendor, the Republic of St. Mark was actually in a somewhat precarious situation. Perhaps only its location saved Venice from the peril of dynastic rule, which had extinguished the liberties of republican Florence. Venice was, in fact, involved in the warfare between France and the Holy Roman Empire that devastated so much of Italy. Moreover, it had profited from the fall of the Borgia family in 1503 by annexing many papal territories in the Romagna. Not satisfied with recapturing these in 1506, Pope Julius II in 1508 organized the League of Cambrai, which during the ensuing months temporarily stripped Venice of almost all its possessions on the Italian mainland. Most were eventually regained, but throughout the sixteenth century Venice was compelled to adopt a defensive position with regard to the European monarchies, and especially the Holy Roman Empire, which under Charles V had assumed mastery over much of Europe. It is ironic that the greatest Venetian painter, Titian, found important patrons in the Hapsburg rulers Charles V and his son Philip II.

Throughout the sixteenth century, Venice maintained its reputation as the most important European center for the production of luxury glass objects. Extravagant products of the abilities of Venetian glassblowers and designers were prized in European courts. One of the rare surviving examples from the first half of the century is a Venetian nef (fig. 19.3). A nef ("ship") was a table centerpiece, often elaborate, for serving salt or other rare condiments (for a gold and enamel example commissioned for the table of the king of France, see fig. 20.21). That Venetian wealth was intimately tied to trade by sea made vessels such as this an especially appropriate product for the local glass factories. The delicate strands of colored glass, leaping fish, and applied, mold-pressed satyr masks of this elaborate blown-*cristallo* vessel, showcase the skills available at the Venetian glass factories. *Cristallo*, a clear, almost weightless glass, was developed by Venetian glassworkers around 1520; previously the Venetians had specialized in making relatively simple shapes in colored glass decorated with painted details ("enameled glass"). *Cristallo* was highly flexible and encouraged experimentation, much like the Venetian artists' exploration of the possibilities inherent in oil paint during this period. The survival of this highly fragile nef suggests that it was probably seldom used and may have been more an object of display and admiration than a utilitarian work.



19.3. ERMONIA VIVARINI (attributed to the workshop of). *Nef.* c. 1525–50. *Cristallo* with added detail in blue glass and mold-pressed satyr-mask medallions, height 11⅞" (30.2 cm). British Museum, London.

In 1521 Ermonia Vivarini of Venice received a special privilege to produce vessels in the shape of ships. Venice's glass factories were located on the nearby island of Murano so that the fires of the ovens were not a threat to the safety of the city.

## Giorgione

Giorgio (in Venetian dialect, Zorzi) Barbarelli was born in Castelfranco, on the Venetian mainland, probably about 1475–77, and came to Venice at an early age. A few documents record his activities in 1507–8, and in 1510 he died of the plague. According to a tradition retold by Vasari, "Big George" ("-one" is the Italian suffix for "big") was given to worldly delights, was a good conversationalist, a great lover, and sang beautifully, accompanying himself on the lute. As a pupil of Bellini, Giorgione continued the tradition established by his master of using landscape to convey mood and enhance meaning. The late landscapes of Bellini and the work of Giorgione explore nature in a new way. It is revealing that at the moment when Bellini and Giorgione were placing a new emphasis on landscape and

nature, Venice possessed little nature to enjoy. Perhaps the interest in landscape on the part of artists and patrons can be explained by the absence of landscape from daily experience. Similarly, the emphasis on landscape that developed during the Romantic movement in England—nature poetry and nature painting—went hand in hand with the Industrial Revolution, which was rapidly devouring the countryside around major urban centers.

There is almost as much disagreement about the works of Giorgione as there is about those of Giotto. The Venetian painter's only surviving altarpiece, the *Enthroned Madonna with Sts. Liberalis and Francis* (fig. 19.4), remains in situ in the cathedral of his home town. Even this simple symmetrical composition is not without its surprises. Ordinarily, a Renaissance artist provided some means of access to the Virgin, but Giorgione's Mary is seated on a throne without visible steps. His heavenly queen is, for all her gentle beauty, as remote as Cimabue's (see fig. 2.10), although in a different way, for her scale within the pictorial space is delicate and her demeanor,



19.4. GIORGIONE. *Enthroned Madonna with Sts. Liberalis and Francis.* c. 1500–5. Panel, 6'6¾" × 5' (2 × 1.5 m). 🏛 Cathedral, Castelfranco. Commissioned by Tuzio Costanzo, perhaps to commemorate the death of his son Matteo in 1504.

captured in downcast eyes, demure. Giorgione paid homage to his teacher by repeating Giovanni Bellini's figure of St. Francis from the San Giobbe altarpiece (see fig. 15.41) in reverse. But where most of Bellini's large altarpieces feature an architectural background that continues the forms of the painting's three-dimensional frame, behind Mary's throne in the Castelfranco altarpiece our gaze is allowed to move out over land and sea. There is a port above St. Francis, while a village above St. Liberalis, on the left, is protected by a tower. Both landscapes show signs of warfare: two soldiers have stopped by a bend in the road at the right, and at the left the guard tower is shattered as if by artillery. These allusions, coupled with the melancholic mood of the picture, suggest that the lofty placing of the Virgin may be an appeal for her intercession during a period of military occupation. The pyramidal composition suggests a familiarity with the Florentine High Renaissance, which Giorgione could have acquired as a result of Fra Bartolommeo's 1508 visit to Venice. But within the pyramid, Giorgione manipulated a series of diagonals: the slanting spear and the parallel motion of the drapery over the Virgin's right knee are answered by counterdiagonals in the smaller folds of her mantle.

Giorgione's *Tempestuous Landscape with the Soldier and the Gypsy* (fig. 19.5) has been the subject of scholarly controversy. Who is the nude woman? Why is she nursing her child outdoors? Who is the soldier standing nearby? Many efforts have been made to find a subject for the painting in literature or the Bible; it has even been suggested that the picture has no literary subject. In 1530, twenty years after Giorgione's death, the Venetian Marcantonio Michiel saw the painting in the house of Gabriel Vendramin and referred to it in his journal: "The little landscape on canvas with the tempest, with the gypsy and the soldier, was from the hand of Zorzi da Castelfranco." An X-ray reveals that Giorgione had originally painted a nude woman bathing where the male figure with the lance now stands—an alteration that suggests either a change in the painting's narrative or that there was no narrative. One suggestion has been that the painting is a caprice—a painting of a mood—on Giorgione's part. If this is the case, it would be a remarkable development in the history of Western art, although we should also remember that this is a small painting made, most probably, for a private collector. If it marks a breakthrough in iconographic practice, it would seem to be one that very few people knew about.

In the unkempt world of this landscape, the bushes are shaggy, the columns ruined, and the bridge precarious. The scene is threatened by a storm cloud that casts a shadow on the bridge and by a bolt of lightning that illuminates the scene with a sudden glare. A high level of humidity is suggested, and there is a crackling tension in the air.

19.5. GIORGIONE. *Tempestuous Landscape with the Soldier and the Gypsy.* 1505–10. Canvas, 32¼ × 28¾" (82 × 73 cm). Accademia, Venice.

One of Giorgione's last paintings—or so we are led to believe because it was finished by Titian, presumably after Giorgione's death—is the *Sleeping Venus* (fig. 19.6), the first in a long series of recumbent female nudes in the history of art. Far removed from Botticelli's goddess (see fig. 13.24), who stands nude at her birth but is about to be

covered, Giorgione's Venus sleeps, and her nude body echoes the curves of the earth. While the lower line of the body is a single, flowing curve, the upper shape leads our eye in a wavelike movement from her head across her breast to the hand that covers her genitals—a gesture both discreet and suggestive. The sensuous effect of the painting

19.6. GIORGIONE (finished by Titian). *Sleeping Venus.* c. 1507–10. Canvas, 3'6¾" × 5'9" (1.1 × 1.75 m). Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. Perhaps commissioned by Girolamo Marcello, who married in 1507.

is heightened by the warm tones and the naturalistic texture of the goddess's body, which is emphasized by the fabrics on which she reclines. This must have been a private painting; perhaps it was even kept covered with a curtain, as we know was common with such paintings in later centuries.

X-rays reveal a kneeling Cupid at Venus's feet who was overpainted after this area of the work was damaged. In 1525 the painting was described thus: "The canvas of the nude Venus, sleeping in the countryside with Cupid, was by Zorzi of Castelfranco, but the landscape and Cupid were completed by Titian." Technical analysis has revealed that the fabric on which Venus sleeps was also reworked by Titian. The face in its present state does not seem to fit the style of either artist; perhaps it was repainted in Dresden in 1843, when Titian's Cupid was covered?

Another unconventional picture, the so-called *Pastoral Scene* (fig. 19.7), has been attributed to both the last phase of Giorgione's art and the early stages of Titian's. The subject is probably an allegory of poetry. Two gentlemen, one fashionably dressed and playing a lute, are seated on the ground in conversation, paying no attention to two nude women, suggesting that the latter are probably allegorical. One of these women seems about to play a recorder

(an allegory of music?), while the other pours water back into a well from a pitcher, a gesture that has resisted convincing interpretation. The landscape lacks clear-cut shapes or edges, form is lost in shadow, and there is almost more shadow than light. The face of the young man on the left, for instance, seems full of expression but is so deeply shaded that we can see little more than the profile and the position of one eyebrow. The man on the right turns toward him. Their exchange is intimate but uncertain in nature.

The poetic mood of the painting is used by some critics to support the attribution to Giorgione, while others argue that the complex figural composition and the manner in which the figures dominate the landscape are atypical of Giorgione's usual approach and the work should be credited to Titian. If the painting is by Giorgione, he had started to paint with broader strokes and to endow his shadows with a greater coloristic subtlety (the painting is covered with layers of darkened varnish and as a result the colors we see today are somewhat muted). Current scholarship leans toward an attribution to Titian, but there will probably never be a definitive answer to the authorship of this memorable painting, which documents the intersection between the two artists who together revolutionized Venetian painting at the beginning of the Cinquecento.

19.7. GIORGIONE or TITIAN. *Pastoral Scene*, now known as the *Concert Champêtre*. c. 1510. Canvas, 3'5⁵/₁₆" × 4'5³/₄"
(1.05 × 1.36 m). The Louvre, Paris.
Our illustration shows the composition without later additions. This combination of nude women with men dressed in contemporary
clothes inspired Edouard Manet's notorious *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* of 1863.

# Titian

Tiziano Vecellio, known in English as Titian, was born in Cadore, north of Venice at the base of the spectacular mountain range known as the Dolomites. The tradition that he was born about 1477 was based on Titian's own statement in a 1571 letter to King Philip II of Spain that he was ninety-five years old. Since Titian was asking the king to pay him for works he had already received, the artist may have exaggerated his age. When Vasari visited Titian in 1566, he recorded Titian's age as seventy-six, which would place the date of his birth in 1489 or 1490. No independent artistic activity on Titian's part is recorded before 1508 when, barely twenty years old according to his friend Ludovico Dolce, he assisted Giorgione in painting frescoes on the exterior of the German commercial headquarters in

Venice. No securely dated works by him before 1511 survive, and contemporary sources describe him as still young when, in 1516–18, he painted the *Assumption of the Virgin* (see fig. 19.10). The most probable date for his birth is about 1488. His documented career, then, spans sixty-eight years, until his death in 1576.

During this career Titian made one of the crucial discoveries in the history of Western painting: he was the first painter in modern times to free the brush from the task of exactly describing tactile surfaces, volumes, and details, and to convert it into a vehicle for the direct perception of light through color. This new technique also enhanced movement and supported the expression of strong emotion. Other artists had taken tentative steps in this direction, but it was Titian who boldly transformed the art of painting in this manner. In a painting as early as the

*Assumption of the Virgin*, he demonstrated his knowledge and mastery of this new type of brushwork, but restricted its use to areas relatively remote from the observer (see fig. 19.11). Long before the end of his life he was painting entire pictures by this method, as were many other painters in Venice. The raised brushstrokes created by the use of thick paint are known as *impasti*.

Brushwork, however, was only one aspect of Titian's style. The painter Palma Giovane tells us that Titian built up his pictures in oil over a reddish ground to establish a warm base for all the colors, and that in his later years he would turn his paintings face to the wall for months and then study them anew as if they were his worst enemies. New layers of paint might then be applied, especially glazes (the Italian word *velatura*, or veiling, expresses well the role these glazes play), which toned down colors that might stand out too much and created a unity among colors, shadows, and highlights. "Trenta, quaranta velature!" ("Thirty, forty glazes!") he is said to have cried, and possibly there are so many, except where zealous restorers have cleaned them off, stripping Titian's paintings down to the strong colors he had muted and united. Palma stated that in one particular late work Titian "painted more with his fingers than with his brushes."

Ludovico Dolce, who knew Titian well, wrote that the artist arrived in Venice at the age of eight with his older brother and was set to work with a mosaicist named Zuccato. Dissatisfied, he was taken on by Gentile and then Giovanni Bellini. He did not stay there long, but moved on to study with Giorgione. By 1510 he seems to have become independent. The young man was also a shrewd businessman who invested his earnings, and by 1531 he was able to buy a palatial residence in Venice, looking out across the lagoons and, on clear days, to the slopes of the Dolomites where he had been born. In 1533, already wealthy and famous, Titian was summoned to Bologna to meet the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who made him a count and his children hereditary nobles. In 1545 and 1546 he was in Rome, where he was awarded Roman citizenship on the Capitoline Hill. Twice the emperor called him to Augsburg as court painter. There is even a famous tale that one day, when Charles V was visiting his studio, Titian chanced to drop his brush and the emperor stooped to pick it up. Whether true or not, the story conveys the contemporary notion that an artist like Titian deserved respect and consideration even from the highest nobility.

From the start of his career, Titian showed his impatience with tradition. Every motif, every convention had to be seen afresh. In his early *Madonna and Child* (fig. 19.8), nicknamed the *Gypsy Madonna* because of Mary's unusually dark hair and eyes, he takes a standard Bellini



19.8. TITIAN. *Madonna and Child*, known popularly since the nineteenth century as the *Gypsy Madonna*. c. 1511. Panel, $25^7/_8 \times 32^7/_8$" (65.8 × 83.5 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. X-rays indicate that Titian made the figures more massive as he worked on the painting and that he changed the position of the Christ Child's head; originally he looked off to the right.

composition—the parapet, standing child, and centralized cloth-of-honor placed behind the Virgin—and pushes them all off center. The Virgin stands slightly to the right of center, but she overlaps only one edge of the cloth-of-honor, which has been moved to leave a single landscape view instead of the customary two. The parapet runs less than halfway across the lower edge, and the disjunction between parapet and cloth-of-honor leads our eye upward in a slight diagonal over a second parapet to the hills and mountains of the background. Throughout Titian's career, he used diagonal placings and views with increasing intensity to break the traditional symmetry of Renaissance pictures. Another of Titian's lifelong compositional principles is already visible in the *Gypsy Madonna*: the Virgin forms an equilateral triangle. The triangle and the diagonal are for Titian's art what the spiral is for Raphael and the block for Michelangelo.

In the *Gypsy Madonna*, the sweetness of Bellini's Madonnas is replaced by a sturdy naturalism. The sun shines full on her face, with its large, wide-set eyes, and a half-shadow lingers on her neck. Her cheeks and lips glow in the sea light characteristic of Venice, where light is so often reflected from below. Both the Virgin's three-dimensionality and her quiet grace are impressive, and her child is a sturdy boy.

Some have argued that Titian's *Portrait of a Bearded Man* (fig. 19.9) is a self-portrait. By resting the man's elbow on the parapet so that the sleeve overlaps the edge, Titian brings the sitter into our space and there is an immediate sense of familiarity—something not every patron would appreciate. The life-sized figure, the unified composition, and the simplified brushwork—which on close inspection emphasizes breadth rather than detail—create a figure that is also convincing from a distance. If this is a self-portrait, is it too far-fetched to suggest that it might have been a *trompe l'oeil* demonstration, placed in a window to momentarily deceive a passerby? Although the body is almost at right angles to the picture plane, the head turns and the eyes calmly engage us. The broad, spiral motion of arm and head suggests that Titian already knew something about what was going on in Florence, but he handled the pose in his own way. The manner in which the hand suddenly turns out of sight, into shadow, is unexpected and un-Florentine. The light illuminates the near side of the face, emphasizing the cheek, forehead, and strong, straight nose, so that the face holds our interest despite the complex blue-violet sleeve.

Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* (figs. 19.10–19.11) is over 20 feet high, but it seems even larger because of his treatment of the figures, who are heroic in both proportion and deportment. This grand picture competes successfully with the vast Gothic interior of the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (see figs. 5.15–5.16), on whose high altar it still stands. There may or may not be some relationship to Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (see fig. 17.53); Titian did not visit Florence and Rome until 1545, but some notion of the grandeur and scale of the central Italian High Renaissance could have been brought to Venice by Fra Bartolommeo and others. In addition, it is possible that Titian came to know certain aspects of the style through drawings or the many prints that were made after the compositions of Raphael and others.

Titian imagined the moment of the Assumption—the physical ascent into heaven of the Virgin's body miraculously reunited with her soul after burial—as a scene of cosmic jubilation. The foreground is filled with sturdy apostles who gesticulate wildly. Their movements converge to form a triangle and the Virgin ascends from its apex on a curving cloud populated by *putti*. These robust children sail upward with Mary into the golden light. In the midst of this throng, the dramatically twisting Mary surges upward as her mantle billows about her, creating more diagonals and triangles. Even God the Father floats diagonally toward us in space (fig. 19.11). Mary's entire being seems to be yearning for this heavenly ascent.

To anyone who has seen the painting in situ the color is unforgettable. Perhaps the necessity for broad effects that would be visible from a distance persuaded Titian to restrict himself to a few dominant hues—reds, blues, and greens in the garments of the apostles and the traditional blue and red for Mary's mantle and tunic, set off against a limpid blue sky below and the golden glow of heaven above. The result is a composition of grand simplicity; one might describe it as a symphonic structure composed in massive chords that reach the observer immediately and directly.

Before we leave the *Assumption*, it is worth pausing to read what Titian's contemporary Ludovico Dolce wrote about the picture and its first reception in Venice:

> Here Titian, a young man even now, painted in oils the Virgin ascending to heaven.... And certainly the grandness and awesomeness of Michelangelo, the charm and loveliness of Raphael, and the coloring proper to nature are incorporated into this painting. It was, nevertheless, the first public commission that Titian carried out in oils; and he did it in the shortest space of time, and in his youth. All of which meant that the clumsy artists and dimwit masses, who had seen up till then nothing but the dead and cold creations of Giovanni Bellini, Gentile, and Vivarino (the fact being that Giorgione had not yet received a public commission for a work in oils, and that his creations were mostly limited to half-figures and portraits)—works that had no movement and no projection—grossly maligned this same picture. Later the envy cooled off, and the truth, little by little, opened people's eyes, so that they began to marvel at the new style opened up by Titian in Venice.... And certainly one can speak of a miracle at work in the fact that, without as yet having seen the antiquities of Rome, which were a source of enlightenment to all excellent painters, and purely by dint of that little tiny spark which he had uncovered in the works of Giorgione, Titian discerned and apprehended the essence of perfect painting.

Probably a year or so before the *Assumption*, Titian completed the painting known as *Sacred and Profane Love* (fig. 19.12). The exact subject of this compelling painting has been difficult to unravel, and the following summary combines elements drawn from several interpretations.
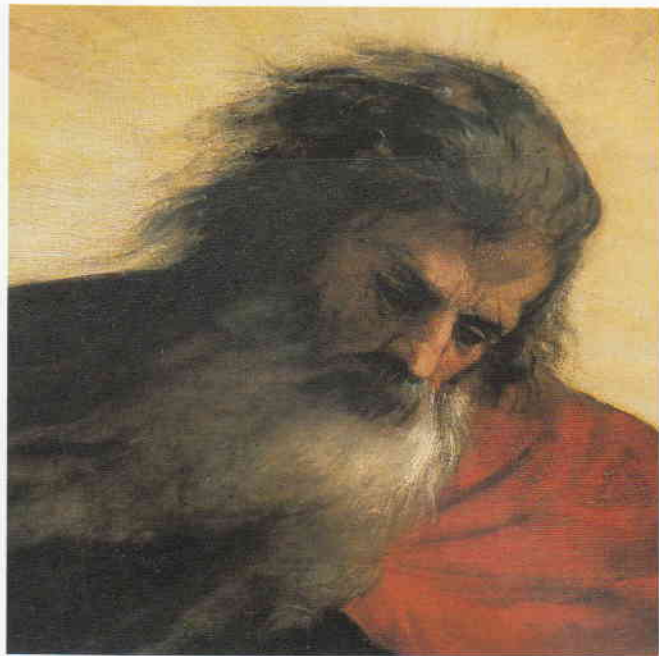
19.11. Head of God the Father, detail of fig. 19.10.

Two women, so similar in form and coloring that they look like sisters, sit on a fountain in the late afternoon. One is clothed in white, girdled with a locked belt, wearing gloves, and holding a closed jar. She is seen against a fortified hill town to which a huntsman returns, while in the countryside two rabbits, symbols of love, establish a mood of quiet peace. As she looks past us, apparently listening, she toys with a cut rose. The other figure is nude except for a white scarf and a rose-colored cloak that flies out as if she has just arrived. She holds aloft an urn from which a flame rises. Behind her stretches an open and luminous landscape with a lake, in which huntsmen catch up with a rabbit, shepherds tend their flocks, and a church steeple rises above the horizon. The fountain has the shape of a sarcophagus, and its lid is thrust aside so that Cupid may stir its waters. A golden bowl half filled with clear water rests upon the edge. A relief panel on the front of the fountain shows the arms of Niccolò Aurelio, vice-chancellor of the Venetian Republic, with, to the left, a horse led by its mane by a groom while others flee, and, to the right, a man

being beaten and a woman being led by her hair. While the meaning of several details remains obscure or debatable, it seems evident that this is a picture about love and, perhaps, marriage; the style allows a dating in the 1510s, and Aurelio's marriage in 1514 suggests a plausible connection. The woman dressed in white could represent an idealized bride, while the nude female, who is in the company of winged Cupid, is almost certainly Venus. Perhaps Venus has arrived to advise the seated woman on



19.12. TITIAN. *Sacred and Profane Love.* 1514. Canvas, 3'11" × 9'2" (1.2 × 2.8 m). Borghese Gallery, Rome. Probably commissioned by Niccolò Aurelio in celebration of his wedding to Laura Bagarotto in 1514. For a detail, see p. 441.

some affair of the heart. The traditional title should probably be discarded, but the iconography is so unparalleled that it is difficult to know what to put in its place. Titian composed this vision in terms of his characteristic triangles in a simple harmony based on whites and silver-grays, blues, roses, and deep greens that already show the warmth and depth of his glazing technique.

The Renaissance interest in ancient mythological themes can be seen in a series of three pictures Titian painted for Alfonso d'Este, duke of Ferrara. Two of these follow descriptions by the third-century Roman author Philostratus of pictures he had seen in a villa near Naples that represented the *Festival of Venus* and the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (fig. 19.13). In Titian's version, set on the island of Andros, where a river of wine gushes from the ground, the inhabitants, inflamed with wine and love, dance,

gather in couples, or sleep, like the nude Ariadne in the lower right corner. One little boy unashamedly urinates, while at the top of the hill the god of the river of wine lies in drunken sleep in a shaft of sunlight.

The subject of *Bacchus and Ariadne* (fig. 19.14) in the same series is drawn from a variety of classical sources in a synthesis perhaps suggested by the poet Ariosto. It shows Bacchus leaping from his chariot to rescue Ariadne, who had been abandoned on the island of Naxos by Theseus. The god is attended by drunken maenads clashing cymbals and by satyrs brandishing sticks and the hindquarter of a goat torn apart for their feast. The male figure struggling with snakes was inspired by the *Laocoön* group, discovered in Rome less than two decades earlier and known to Titian through either a small version or a print (see fig. 17.3).



19.13. TITIAN. *Bacchanal of the Andrians.* c. 1522–24. Canvas, 5'9" × 6'4" (1.75 × 1.93 m). Prado, Madrid. Commissioned by Alfonso d'Este for his *studiolo,* the Camerino d'Alabastro, in the castle at Ferrara.

This was not the first work Alfonso commissioned from Titian, for in 1516 he had requested a painting (now lost) of the *Tribute Money* for the door of a cabinet—a reminder that Renaissance artists were often engaged by patrons to produce small, functional works. The musical composition seen in the foreground of the *Bacchanal* is identifiable as a song for four voices attributed to Adrian Willaert, a favorite composer of the patron. The text in translation reads "He who drinks and does not drink again, does not know what drinking is." Titian's signature is placed suggestively on a piece of paper slipped into the bodice of the woman in red reclining in the central foreground.

19.14. TITIAN. *Bacchus and Ariadne*. 1522–23. Canvas, 5'9" × 6'3" (1.75 × 1.91 m). National Gallery, London. Commissioned by Alfonso d'Este for his *studiolo* in the castle at Ferrara.

Titian here faithfully followed descriptions written by the ancient authors Catullus and Ovid. He came to Ferrara to install the painting in February of 1523. It is signed on the amphora in the lower left foreground. The presence of prominent signatures on all three of the paintings for Alfonso d'Este reveals Titian's status at this time.

In these paintings Titian reached a new freedom of figural composition and brilliance of coloristic expression. The rich flesh tones and the vivacious blues and roses were clearly designed to stand out against the alabaster architecture of the setting. But the eloquence of color in the shadows is almost more surprising than its vibrancy in the light. Note the sheen of the crystal pitcher against the cloud or the glow of the leopards' coats where they are cast into shadow by the leaping Bacchus.

Meanwhile, in an important religious work, Titian broke decisively with tradition. The *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* (figs. 19.15–19.16) was commissioned for a side aisle altar in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. The scene is set outdoors, but with the portico of what must be intended to represent the Virgin's heavenly palace as the setting. An armored warrior holding an olive-crowned flag with the arms of the Pesaro family presents St. Peter, in the

middle, with a captured Turk. This is a reference to the Battle of Santa Maura, which was won in 1502 by Jacopo Pesaro, bishop of Paphos and commander of the papal galleys. Jacopo himself kneels at the left, accompanied by the turbaned Turkish prisoner, while at the right kneel five male members of his family.

Titian's break with tradition is seen in the composition. An artist in the conservative Venetian tradition would have given us a symmetrical arrangement, but Titian deployed diagonals and triangles in depth and height. After turning the palace at a sharp angle to the picture plane, Titian set the Virgin so far to one side that her head forms one corner of a triangle of which the other two points are provided by the kneeling chiefs of the Pesaro clan. Similar triangles in smaller scale reappear throughout in figures and drapery patterns. The off-center composition created by Titian's experimentation with the illusionistic architecture as he

19.15. TITIAN. *Madonna of the Pesaro Family*. 1519–26. Canvas, 16' × 8'10" (4.9 × 2.7 m). 🏛 Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. Commissioned by Jacopo Pesaro, bishop of Paphos, and his brothers. X-rays reveal that Titian changed the architectural setting three times in the course of executing this painting. The earliest version featured an apse, while the second had columns like those in the final painting, but much smaller in scale. The frame is original.



19.16. Photograph of TITIAN. *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* in situ in Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice.

painted relates the painting to its original setting, in the left side aisle of the church (see fig. 5.16). The columns, which seem to be inspired by the piers of the Gothic church of the Frari (see fig. 5.15), soar beyond the arched frame, and at the top a cloud floats in, bearing *putti* holding a cross. The result is noble and dramatic. Titian's pictures of the 1520s have all the harmony of the High Renaissance, but with the power of dynamic compositional patterns and shapes rather than muscular action. Now Titian's color has quieted down somewhat; the *Pesaro Madonna* is darker and richer than the work of the preceding decade, softened by his application of multiple glazes.

When Titian took up the subject of the *Entombment* (fig. 19.17) in the mid-1520s, he did so in a measured and controlled fashion. The pose of Christ is borrowed from that of the dead Meleager carried from the boar hunt in Roman sarcophagus reliefs—a motif also appropriated by Raphael for the same subject. Titian fitted his central

19.17. TITIAN. *Entombment*. Mid-1520s(?). Canvas, original size 4'2" × 6'7" (1.27 × 2.10 m), now 3'6" × 7' (1.06 × 2.13 m). The Louvre, Paris. Probably commissioned by a member of the Gonzaga family.

This painting was later truncated by approximately 8 inches (20.3 cm) on the sides and enlarged with strips of canvas across the top and bottom that added approximately 5 inches (12.7 cm) to the height. We have adjusted our image so that it reflects Titian's original intentions.

group—Christ, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and John—into a triangular composition enriched by numerous curving shapes. Within the composition the figures exchange glances of tragic intensity.

Titian's portraiture in the 1520s displays dignity and reserve. No expression crosses the face of the *Man with the Glove* (fig. 19.18), and the triangular relationship of hands and face functions within a color scheme restricted to black, white, and flesh tones. Titian's mastery as a portraitist is felt in the solemn gaze, the luminous eyes, the naturalism of the face, and the informal pose, all of which give the portrait a strong sense of individual character. Challenged by the limited color palette, Titian countered the effect of living, warm flesh with the black and white of the clothing and the beige of the torn glove, which gives the painting its modern name.



19.18. TITIAN. *Man with the Glove*. c. 1520–21(?). Canvas, 39⅜ × 35" (100 × 88.9 cm). The Louvre, Paris. Titian's signature is represented as if carved into the stone block on the right.
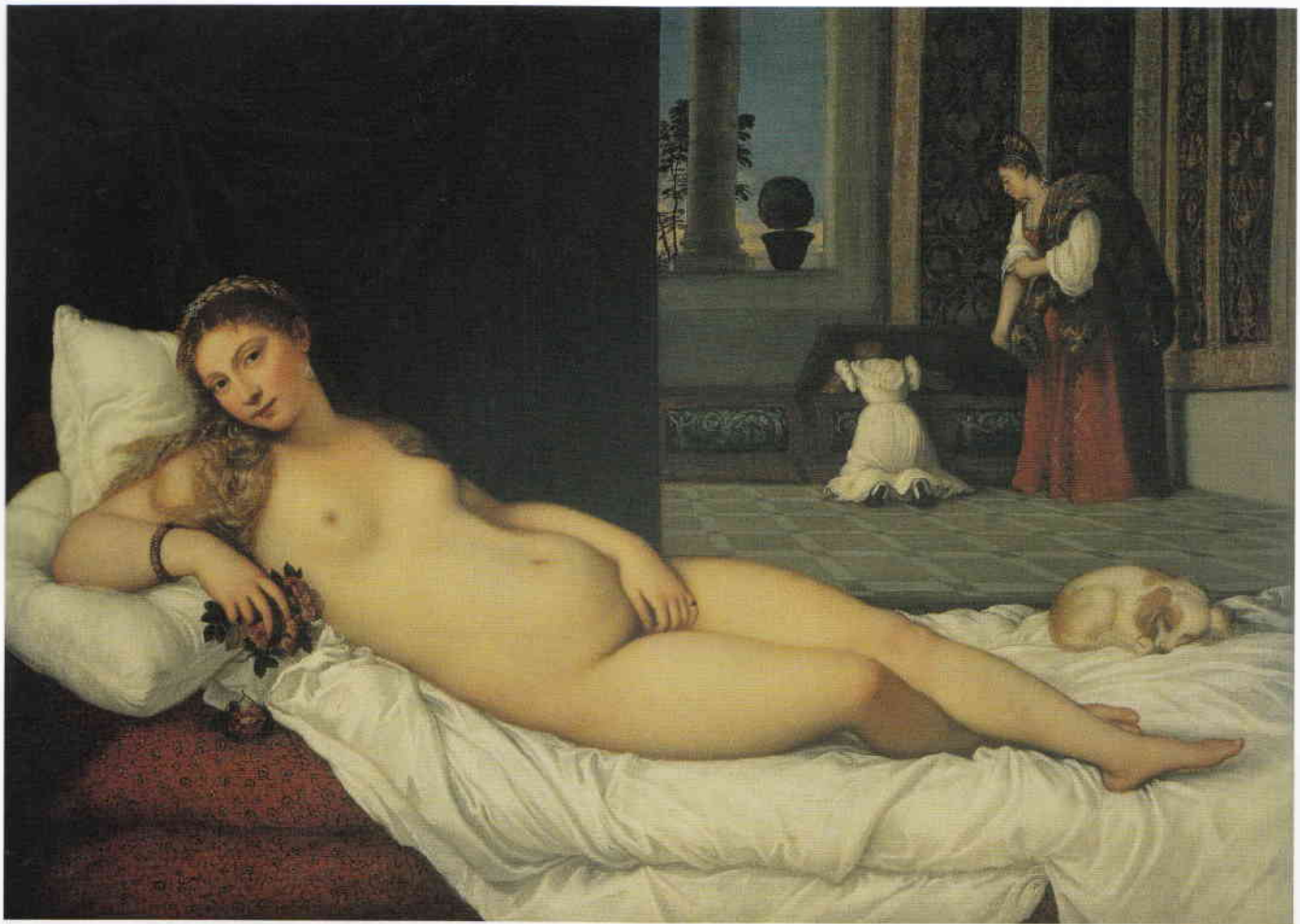
19.19. TITIAN. *"Venus of Urbino."* Finished 1538. Canvas, 3'11" × 5'5" (1.19 × 1.65 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by Guidobaldo II della Rovere, duke of Camerino, later duke of Urbino.

Conservation of the painting has disclosed that it was damaged when the canvas it was painted on was attached to a new backing using a hot iron; as a result, Titian's raised *impasto* brushwork was flattened.

Titian's so-called *Venus of Urbino* (fig. 19.19) was finished in 1538 for Guidobaldo II della Rovere. In this, the earliest in a long series of recumbent Venuses in Titian's work, he returned with such fidelity to the pose of Giorgione's *Venus* (see fig. 19.6) that one suspects the patron may have requested it. But now the nude figure is awake and looking directly at us. She is inside, lying upon a couch or bed with her dog asleep at her feet. One hand idly holds flowers, and her silky, golden-brown hair floods over her shoulders in a contrast of textures and colors that Titian used and reused throughout his long career. Titian divided his background between the delimited area in which the nude reclines and an adjoining chamber, paved with marble, hung with brocades, and lit by an opening onto treetops. In this palatial environment, a splendidly dressed woman looks on while a girl in white searches for something in one of a pair of carved and gilded *cassoni*—the

chests in which clothes were kept in the Renaissance. Is this really a representation of Venus? The patron's correspondence, which betrays his impatience to receive the picture, refers to the subject as "the nude woman." Only her connection with Giorgione's earlier and Titian's later Venuses suggests otherwise. If this is Venus, then Titian went to considerable pains to demythologize her, representing her as a Renaissance prince's lover idly reclining while her lady-in-waiting and maidservant find a garment splendid enough to clothe her. This unprecedented interpretation of the female nude must surely have been shocking to some when it was painted, especially in this period when a woman's behavior was controlled by strict social mores, if it represented not Venus but a particular woman or even an ideal example of female beauty. An analysis of the painting within the context of Renaissance attitudes and practices by scholar Rona Goffin emphasizes that

female masturbation was approved by theologians because it was believed to encourage not just fertility but the chance of conceiving a male. Goffin suggests that this is what Titian represented here. Whether the patron or the artist intended such an interpretation as a part of this revolutionary painting is impossible to determine. Certainly Titian's image, created as it was for a particular patron, must be related to changing Renaissance attitudes toward the body and the role of sexual activity in societal and personal behavior; exactly how remains uncertain.

Titian painted an uninterrupted sequence of dramatic works from the early 1540s until he was stopped by death. In 1542 he accepted a commission, offered originally to Vasari when he visited Venice, for three scenes of violent action for the ceiling of the church of Santo Spirito in Isola. The subjects, *Cain Killing Abel*, the *Sacrifice of Isaac*, and *David and Goliath* (fig. 19.20), prefigure Christ's sacrifice. Here Titian, who still had not visited Rome, showed for the first time a sustained interest in the heroic poses and powerful musculature of the Roman High Renaissance. In the heavily muscled figures, who seem almost to fall out of the confines of the paintings, there is an echo of Giulio Romano's giants (see fig. 18.65), while the influence of ancient sculptures has also played a role.

Among the earliest in a series of portraits in the new, emotionally charged style is *Pope Paul III Farnese* (fig. 19.21), which Titian was commissioned to paint when the pope visited Bologna in 1543. This unwilling supporter of the Counter-Reformation was at heart a Renaissance prince, and he is shown in a restless pose, twisted in his chair, one hand on his purse, his head jutting forward, his gaze moving in our direction. The characterization of the face and the powerful treatment of the features, hands, hair, and beard are combined with an electrifying display of reds and flashes of light on the velvet papal *mozzetta* that he is wearing. Titian beat these strokes onto the canvas with a broad, heavy brush. His highlights crackle with a new freedom, living a life of their own in a manner that helps convey the character of the painting's subject.

As Titian's life work culminated in a final quarter century of activity, his new freedom of light and



19.20. TITIAN. *David and Goliath.* 1542. Canvas, 9'2" (2.8 m) square. Sacristy of Sta. Maria della Salute, Venice. Commissioned for Sto. Spirito in Isola, Venice.



19.21. TITIAN. *Pope Paul III Farnese.* 1543. Canvas, 45 × 35" (114 × 89 cm). Museo di Capodimonte, Naples. Commissioned by Pope Paul III (see figs. 18.57–18.59).
It is always difficult to determine the length of time it took to produce a work of art, in part because the artist was probably executing several other works at the same time. However, documents indicate that in 1531 Titian completed a half-length figure of a saint in a month. This portrait may have taken a similar length of time.

19.22. TITIAN. *Danaë*. 1552–53(?). Canvas, 4'2¼" × 5'10" (1.28 × 1.78 m). Prado, Madrid. Commissioned by Philip II of Spain.
This is a variation of a composition originally created in 1545–46 for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, grandson of Pope Paul III, and now in the Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples.

brushwork increased, often at the expense of solid form. Tactile reality is softened and dissolved or even shattered by bursts of brushwork that seem to be recording luminary visions. Generally, these are connected with erotic imagery or scenes of religious experience. For example, Titian repeated three times his composition showing the mortal woman Danaë seduced by Jupiter, who descended upon her as a shower of golden coins. For the figure of Danaë, Titian utilized a pose from Michelangelo, who had in turn derived it from an ancient Roman relief and used it for a picture of Leda—a woman also seduced by Jupiter but in the form of a swan—and for the *Night* (see fig. 18.5) of the Medici Chapel. Titian's languid Danaë, however, has none of the muscular tension that we sense in Michelangelo's figure. In the version of *Danaë* painted for King Philip II of Spain (fig. 19.22), Titian included a greedy maidservant stretching out her apron to try to catch some of the coins. Her rough features and crude avarice contrast with the beauty and rapture of Danaë; one woman looks for material gain, the other accepts a love that is divine in origin and expressed in light. The loose brushwork of Titian's late style emphasizes the warmth of Danaë's body, the reflections of light on the folds of drapery, and the glorious burst of golden, copper, silver, and turquoise rays flooding from the cloud. Titian called his paintings of mythological subjects *poesie* (loosely, "poetries"), but whether he invented the term is uncertain.

When Vasari and Michelangelo visited Titian's studio in the Belvedere Palace in Rome, they saw the Venetian painter's first version of this subject, painted for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. Vasari wrote that he and Michelangelo "praised it, as one does in the presence of the painter.

After [we] had left, in discussing Titian's method, Michelangelo added that his while color [*colorito*] and his style much pleased him, it was a pity that Venetian painters did not learn to draw well from the beginning, and that they did not pursue a better method in their studies. 'For,' he said, 'If Titian had been in any way assisted by art and design [*disegno*], as he is by nature, and above all in counterfeiting life, no one could do better work, for he has a fine spirit and a beautiful and lively manner.'" Whether Michelangelo actually said this is uncertain. Such comments attributed to him play a role in Vasari's assertion that the stress on drawing (*disegno*) in Florentine art was superior to the emphasis the Venetian painters placed on color (*colore*) in evolving their compositions.

Titian's huge altarpiece of the *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* (fig. 19.23) represents the Early Christian saint

19.23. TITIAN. *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence*. c. 1548–57. Canvas, 16'5" × 9'2" (5 × 2.8 m). �🏛 Chiesa dei Gesuiti, Venice. Commissioned by Lorenzo Massolo for his tomb chapel in Sta. Maria dei Crociferi, Venice.
Renaissance artists did not hesitate to replicate their works if commissioned to do so, and in 1564–67 Titian produced a variation of this altarpiece for King Philip II of Spain that is now in the Escorial near Madrid. When Vasari visited Titian's studio he saw the version being painted for Philip and praised it as "executed with admirable skill, ingenuity, and good judgment."
Many of Titian's works, including this one, were known throughout Europe as a result of prints made by the Netherlandish artist Cornelis Cort, who in 1565 reached an agreement with Titian to reproduce his works. The frame is original.

being burned on a grill after he refused to make a sacrifice to the ancient Roman gods. Titian set the scene at night, contrasting the warm embers of the flames below with the white light of heaven that breaks through the clouds above and toward which Lawrence reaches. The saint's tormentors, whose armor catches the glints of the flames and torches, blow on the fire and force Lawrence back down on the grill with a giant pitchfork. Titian represented the saint dramatically foreshortened in the illusionistic space, at a rising angle that contrasts with the downward slope of the buildings to the right. The composition is closed on the left by an impassive ancient idol seen from below. These forceful angles of vision, the strong movement of the saint and his tormentors, and the crackling flames and diagonal torches draw the spectator into a confrontation between torture and redemption that cannot be ignored. With half the surface painted black, this image is the most evocative night scene since Raphael's *Liberation of St. Peter from Prison* (see fig. 17.51), and, like that work, must have played a role in inspiring the nocturnal visions of later Baroque painters.

A completely different mood is captured in the *Rape of Europa* (fig. 19.24), another of Titian's *poesie*. The nymph Europa had been walking along the seashore with companions when Jupiter appeared as a white bull. Europa innocently wove garlands of flowers for the bull, but he



19.24. TITIAN. *Rape of Europa*. 1559–62. Canvas, 6'1" × 6'9" (1.85 × 2.05 m). Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. Commissioned by Philip II of Spain. Twelve years after this painting arrived in Spain, Titian was still waiting to be paid by the king.

suddenly swept her off across the waters, leaving her alarmed companions on the shore. Europa clings to one of the bull's horns and tries to maintain her balance. The bull's speed lifts her garment to expose her legs and carries her rose-colored mantle upward. The picture's direction from left to right is accelerated by cupids, who ride on a fish or frolic in the air. Titian expressed the departure from earth, exaggerating the distance between foreground and background, diminishing the figures and mountains to tiny proportions. In the landscape, Titian's flashing brushwork suggests mountains, sea, clouds, and sky through fluctuations of blue, silver, and apricot. Chords of deeper blue and silver create the water, and the foam around the bull's forelegs parts to reveal a large, spiny fish. Blue and silver highlights enliven the bull's shaggy coat and Europa's filmy garments, and a single bold stroke of white paint creates the erotic glint in the eye of the bull.

When Vasari visited Titian's studio in 1566, he recognized how the artist's style had changed:

His method of painting in these late works is very different from the technique he had used as a young man. For the early works are executed with a certain finesse and an incredible diligence, so that they can be seen from close to as well as from a distance; while these last pictures are executed with broad and bold strokes and smudges, so that from nearby nothing can be seen whereas from a distance they are perfect.... This method of painting has caused many artists, who have wished to imitate him and thus display their skill, to produce clumsy pictures. For although many people have thought that they are painted without effort, this is not the case.... [This style of painting] makes the pictures appear alive and painted with great art, concealing the labor.

In the last decades of Titian's life, he developed a new type of action portrait, as seen in his image of the scholar, architect, artist, collector, and art dealer Jacopo Strada (fig. 19.25). To indicate his profession, Strada holds a marble statuette of Venus, while ancient coins, a fragmentary



19.25. TITIAN. *Jacopo Strada*. 1567–68. Canvas, 49 × 37½" (124 × 95 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Probably commissioned by Jacopo Strada. The portrait was painted in Venice, when Strada, an Italian living and working in Vienna, was there purchasing works for Albrecht V of Bavaria. The letter on the table is addressed to Titian in Venice and perhaps functioned as a kind of signature.

torso, and a bronze figurine lie on the table. Strada's success is shown by his rich costume, fur cape, and massive gold chain with medallion, his gentlemanly status by the sword and dagger, and his scholarship by the books (Strada had a library of over 3,000 volumes). The diagonals of arms, marble statuette, and sidelong glance give to the customary sixteenth-century portrait-with-attributes the excitement of a dramatic moment. This apotheosis of commerce could almost be mistaken for a detail from a larger, narrative picture. Finished as far as the aged Titian ever finished anything, *Jacopo Strada* presents a controlled version of his rich brushwork and luminous glazes.

In his old age, Titian turned toward religious subjects, especially the Passion of Christ. Contemplating the approach of his own death, he seems to have meditated on Christ's suffering in pictures for which no patron is known. In the 1540s Titian had painted the *Crowning with Thorns* (not illustrated here) in a vigorous, physical style similar to that of the ceiling at Santa Maria della Salute (see fig. 19.20). He took up this subject again about 1570 in a picture, perhaps unfinished, found in his studio after his death (fig. 19.26). In this later picture, the violence is communicated by color and brushwork, not muscular activity. The figures seem to be virtually weightless. The drama of shadow and light acquires its ferocity through the vibrancy of the brushwork and what might be called the slow burn of the coloring. *Impasti* rain upon the canvas. The compositional triangles clash and interlock, increasing the storm of pain that surrounds the suffering Christ.

The frequent motifs of torment and chaos that recur in Titian's last years are resolved in the *Pietà* (fig. 19.27). We are drawn into the painting by the Magdalen, who rushes toward us, hair streaming, arm outstretched, her mouth open in a cry of grief. In a heavily rusticated niche, Mary holds the dead Christ. Statues of Moses and the Hellespontine Sibyl stand on bases formed by snarling lions' heads, probably a reference to the Venetian lion, symbol of St. Mark. Moses carries the tablets with the Ten Commandments and the rod with which he struck water from the rock. The figure of St. Jerome, who kneels humbly before Christ, touching his hand and looking up into his face, bears the features of the aged painter. Perhaps Titian depicted himself in this guise because Jerome translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, while, as a painter, Titian is translating Jerome's words into visual form. The motif of the rushing Magdalen is repeated, diagonally, in the position of a soaring *putto* who carries an immense torch. Below the statue of Moses, another *putto* holds the Magdalen's jar of ointment, and below the sibyl a votive picture leaning against the pedestal shows Titian and his son Orazio in prayer before the Pietà, asking for deliverance from the plague.



19.26. TITIAN. *Crowning with Thorns*. c. 1570.
Canvas, 9'2" × 5'11½" (2.8 × 1.8 m). Alte Pinakothek, Munich.
This painting was acquired by Domenico Tintoretto, son of Titian's rival, the painter Jacopo Tintoretto. Vasari wrote that Titian's method of retouching and repainting of his works "is judicious, beautiful, and magnificent, because the pictures seem to come alive...."

The *Pietà* was painted by Titian for his tomb in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, the church that contained two of his masterpieces. Within the niche above Christ, a golden apse mosaic appears as a reminder, in Titian's own memorial, of his place in a Venetian tradition that encompasses both the mosaic domes and apses of San Marco and the illusionistic ones that appear in the paintings of his teacher, Giovanni Bellini, and others (see figs. 15.41–15.42). Shimmering in the luminous glow, we can make out a pelican striking her breast—a traditional symbol of the blood Christ shed for humanity.

Titian was unable to complete the *Pietà*, for both he and Orazio died in the plague of 1576. It was finished, in a manner of speaking, by his assistant Palma Giovane, but it

is not easy to discover just what Palma did. The broken
brushwork seems to be Titian's, and the painting contains
glorious passages, especially in the green tunic of the Mag-
dalen and the masses of her light-brown hair. Echoes of
Titian's intended form seem to vibrate about the faces of
Christ and the Virgin, while a glowing light surrounds the
thorn-crowned head, and the closed eyes are barely indi-
cated. The tremulous disorder of this surface is locked into
the massive triangles of the composition, crossing in depth
as they emanate from or converge upon Christ and Mary.
The hypotenuse of Titian's last triangle, by his own careful
design, is formed by his own body and by the direction of
his gaze as, in the semblance of St. Jerome, he concentrates
all his being on that of Christ.

## Lorenzo Lotto

A strikingly original and almost equally long-lived con-
temporary of Titian was the somewhat older Lorenzo
Lotto (c. 1480/82–1556), who spent most of his active
years far from Venice. Most of Lotto's works were pro-
duced for centers on the Venetian mainland and in what is
now Lombardy and the Marches. Only relatively late in
life did he settle in Venice, and even then he maintained his
ties with the mainland. Throughout his career Lotto

retained his individuality, and his personal inventions run
from examples of extreme naturalism through an interest
in the bizarre, as we shall see. Consistent throughout his
work is a preoccupation with unusual combinations of
color, which Lotto used to entrance his viewer and, on
occasion, to enhance the expressiveness of his subject.

In Lotto's *Annunciation* (fig. 19.1), we are in Mary's
chamber, represented with fidelity to detail yet lit in sur-
prising ways, even from below. Mary has been reading at
a *prie-dieu* when God the Father bursts in from the loggia,
stretching forth his hands as if sending down the dove of
the Holy Spirit, although no dove is seen. Gabriel rushes in
through the door bearing a huge lily. He drops suddenly to
one knee, leaving the other bare, and raises his arm in a
theatrical gesture, staring with wide eyes below flying
yellow locks of hair. Mary turns toward us and opens her
hands in wonder, yet at the same time she seems to shrink
into herself, her eyes staring in an expression that is half
awe, half trance. A cat scurries away in terror, casting a
shadow on the floor, as does the rushing angel.

The very oddness of the scene and its peculiar lighting
suggest a familiarity with Parmigianino and Domenico
Beccafumi. The objects in the Virgin's room include a cur-
tained bed decorated with gold balls, a shelf with books, a
candle, and an inkstand, a towel hanging from a nail, and,

strangest of all, an hourglass with the sands half run out, partly covered with a cloth; such an emphasis on still-life details may reflect the influence of Netherlandish painting. The naturalistic details of Lotto's setting and his strict biblical interpretation of the event, which emphasizes Mary's surprise and her initial difficulty in understanding the meaning of Gabriel's message, may reveal Lotto's engagement with the religious crisis that was sweeping Europe in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. The unexpected presence of God the Father in this scene instead of the traditional dove, as well as the awkwardness of Gabriel—as if he were somewhat uncomfortable with this unprecedented mission—demanded that the viewer ponder anew the mystery of this subject. That Lotto has been credited with the design of a frontispiece for an Italian translation of the Bible published in 1532 may indicate a personal engagement with religion that could have influenced his novel interpretation of a much-represented subject.

In Lotto's *Madonna and Child with Saints Catherine and Thomas* (fig. 19.28), the blue of Mary's tunic and mantle fills the picture as if with the distilled quintessence of sky and distant hills. The picture can be seen as a hymn to youth, health, and beauty. The partly shadowed features of the Virgin Mary seem almost ancient Greek in their breadth and harmony, as is the sense of calm detachment with which the Virgin, Christ, and Catherine welcome Thomas into their company. The influence of the sea light of Venice is apparent here, while Lotto's brushwork, rich yet restrained, recalls that of Correggio rather than the bold, free strokes of Titian, which Lotto never emulated.



19.28. LORENZO LOTTO. *Madonna and Child with Saints Catherine and Thomas.* c. 1528–30. Canvas, 3'8¾" × 5' (1.13 × 1.52 m). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Lotto's portraits are often strikingly original. His *Portrait of a Woman as Lucretia* (fig. 19.29) is unparalleled in the history of Renaissance portraiture. Even this tentative title is uncertain, for whether the woman asked to be represented allegorically as the heroic ancient Roman matron Lucretia or whether her intent was limited to emphasizing the moral of the Lucretia story is uncertain. Lucretia committed suicide after she was raped by Tarquin, preferring to die rather than dishonor her husband's family. The drawing the sitter holds here shows Lucretia's death by the dagger, while the inscription from Livy (*History of Rome* I:58) on the table implies that the ancient Roman woman's example sets a standard for appropriate behavior. The sitter's name was probably Lucrezia (she is sometimes identified as Lucrezia Valier, who was married in Venice in 1533), and the ostensible purpose of the painting would have been to demonstrate her ideas about marital fidelity. Her hair is tied up, indicating that she is married, since unmarried women and brides in Venice usually wore their hair loose. The determination of this wife to uphold Lucretia's standards is expressed in her severe expression and the vigorous manner in which she indicates both drawing and inscription.



**19.29. LORENZO LOTTO.** *Portrait of a Woman as Lucretia* (Lucrezia Valier?). c. 1533. Canvas, 37³/₄ × 43¹/₂" (95.9 × 110.5 cm). National Gallery, London.

Lucrezia Valier married Benedetto Francesco Giuseppe Pesaro da San Benetto on January 19, 1533. Her identification as the sitter is supported in part by the fact that the painting was in the Pesaro family collection in the late eighteenth century.

Because fashion changed quickly in sixteenth-century Venice, the design of Lucretia's dress can be used to support a date in the 1530s. Coats of arms were often characterized by stripes in contrasting colors; the brilliant and distinctive stripes of Lucretia's dress may refer to the arms of her or her husband's family. Asymmetrical colored stripes such as those on the front of the dress were often used to make a broad figure seem less bulky—an effect that in this case is undermined by the extravagant sleeves so popular in the Renaissance. The prominent pendant with its large square ruby and pendant pearl has been identified as wedding jewelry because of its paired motifs, in this case *putti* and cornucopia—symbols of abundance and fertility appropriate to wedding iconography. The portrait's many exceptional details should not distract us from its revolutionary nature. Probably painted less than two decades after Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* (see fig. 16.29), the bold stance of the woman and her compelling glance reveal how quickly one innovation could lead to another during the Renaissance in Italy.

## Tullio Lombardo

The continuing significance of antique models for Italian sculptors is demonstrated in a marble relief by the northern Italian artist Tullio Lombardo (c. 1455–1532). *St. Anthony of Padua and the Miracle of the Miser's Heart* was made for the tomb chapel of the saint in his church of the Santo in Padua (fig. 19.30). When first put into place,

the relief must have seemed like a monumental demonstration of how an ancient Roman sculptor might have portrayed this Christian theme. The story is a dramatic one, for the saint had predicted that after his death the heart of a famous miser would be found not in his body but in his money chest. The episode is clearly stated, with the Franciscan saint gesticulating over the emaciated corpse and the male onlookers expressing their astonishment and dismay, perhaps because they fear they may be guilty of the same sin. The women, however, express no surprise. Perhaps the woman in the right foreground, whose breasts are seen through classicized drapery and who has a child at her feet, is meant to represent the virtue Charity, often shown with a child. Despite the Christian theme, the artist seems to have focused on reviving an ancient mode, with impressive figures, some in ancient dress, seen against a background of ancient architecture, complete with a pediment, an arcade of receding arches, and low-relief decorative patterns drawn from Roman models. The dramatic responses of the witnesses to the miracle cannot overwhelm the expression of calm and order created by the stable composition.

To find such emphasis on ancient Roman style in the works of a Venetian sculptor is not surprising, for at this time the city's intellectuals and politicians were arguing that Venice was the true heir of ancient imperial Rome. Venetians—both those in the city and those resident in Venetian holdings on the mainland, which included Padua—were actively collecting and displaying antiquities and patronizing architecture built in a classicized mode.



19.30. TULLIO LOMBARDO. *St. Anthony of Padua and the Miracle of the Miser's Heart.* 1520–25. Marble, width of relief 8'2½" (2.5 m); height of figures 51" (113 cm). 🏛 Chapel of St. Anthony, the Santo, Padua. Commissioned by the governors of the Santo.
Tullio had already made one relief for St. Anthony's tomb chapel in the first years of the sixteenth century; he was later commissioned to create a third but died without having started it.

## Painting in Northern Italy

During the first two decades of the Cinquecento, the plain of the Po, with its wealthy cities, suffered under the dynastic strife between the Venetian Republic, the Sforza dukes, the French kings, the Hapsburg emperors (who were also kings of Spain), and the papacy. Louis XII of France, who had dethroned and imprisoned Ludovico Sforza, duke of Milan, in 1500, was himself ejected by Swiss troops in the service of Pope Julius II in 1512. Nonetheless King Francis I of France returned to the duchy of Milan in 1515, only to lose it for good to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1521. Milan, once a brilliant creative center, became a Spanish province, ill-governed and economically depressed. Parma, under the papacy, and Mantua and Ferrara, independent duchies, fared better. So did the cities of Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, and Vicenza, all enjoying the enlightened government of Venice, which quickly recovered its political and economic fortunes. Artistically, the

heritage of Mantegna remained a force to be reckoned with in Milan, although it was less powerful than the physical presence, activity, and teaching of Leonardo da Vinci. Parma, as we have seen, had strong ties to Rome. Ferrara had its own artistic tradition, but Brescia and Cremona did not. All three were inevitably submerged in the tide of colorism flowing from Venice.

At the turn of the century, the Milanese scene was dominated by clones of Leonardo, whose works at times were so close to his that attribution problems still plague specialists. These imitators were seldom original, but the works of Bartolomeo Suardi (c. 1465–1530), known as Bramantino (he had studied with Bramante), demonstrate that he is an exception. A painter of the Milanese school, Bramantino may have been influenced in spatial construction by Mantegna and in coloring by Giovanni Bellini, but if so, these were assimilated into his personal vision, as is revealed in his *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 19.31). The painting's size and simple symmetrical composition suggest



19.31. BRAMANTINO. *Adoration of the Magi.* c. 1500. Panel, 22³⁄₈ × 21⁵⁄₈" (56.8 × 55 cm). National Gallery, London.

that it was made for private devotion. Seated on a block of stone in a ruined classical building, the Virgin is flanked by Isaiah and Daniel. The latter, shown as a disheveled wayfarer, looks out to the spectator. On either side stand two bareheaded magi, the older carrying what looks like an ancient gold vase, the younger a rose quartz bowl. The third magus is barely visible behind the youngest, and Joseph is relegated to the extreme left. Bramantino seems to have been fascinated with the asymmetrical balances between, in the foreground, the circular turban, circular basin, and rectangular basins, and, in the background, the architecture, which was perfect until it was suddenly shattered. The broad handling of anatomical forms and drapery is as typical of Bramantino as is the harmony of the colors, dominated by the sonorous blue in the Virgin's mantle, the rose of her tunic, the red lining of the left-hand magus's cloak, and the unexpected and magnificent olive-green of the cloak of the youngest Magus. In this demonstration of clarity and serenity, Bramantino achieved his personal version of the High Renaissance style.

The impact of Giorgione's innovations is evident in the northern Italian centers, where many practitioners of the Giorgionesque manner achieved a high level of poetic charm. An example is the Ferrarese school led by the Dossi brothers, especially Dosso Dossi (Giovanni de Lutero, c. 1490–1542). His *Melissa* (fig. 19.32) represents a benign



19.32. DOSSO DOSSI. *Melissa*. 1520s. Canvas, 5'9¼" × 5'8½" (1.76 × 1.74 m). Borghese Gallery, Rome.

character in Ariosto's influential epic *Orlando Furioso* who frees humans turned into animals or plants by the sorceress Alcina. When Melissa burns Alcina's seals and erases her spells, two men begin to emerge from the trunks of trees. Men-at-arms, presumably just liberated, relax in the background, while a naturalistic dog—in whom surely lurks a person—gazes longingly at the suit of armor he will soon be allowed to resume. Dosso tamed Giorgione's hostile nature; his trees are an array of standardized landscape elements that provide a perfect setting for this magical scene. The crimson-and-gold brocade of Melissa's robe is striking against the gold-and-green sparkle of trees and meadows.

In Venetian territory since 1426, the Lombard city of Brescia had been subject to influences from Leonardesque Milan and Bellinesque Venice. Nonetheless its painters generally maintained a tradition of naturalism that is often considered characteristic of Lombardy as a whole since the Gothic period (see figs. 5.21, 5.24). The Brescian Girolamo Savoldo (c. 1480–after 1548) was working in Florence in 1508 and absorbed something of the Florentine anatomical and draftsmanly tradition, but because he settled in Venice in 1520, he is often included among the Venetian school. Of the same generation as Giorgione and Lotto, Savoldo generally used figure and landscape arrangements from the Giorgionesque tradition, while his deep coloristic resonance came from his use of Venetian glazes. Savoldo continued the Venetian emphasis on poetic effects, but his poetry seems to have been based on fact. The two figures in *Tobias and the Angel* (fig. 19.33) must have been painted from models posed in a strong crosslight. It is not hard to imagine Savoldo picking up wings for the archangel at the poultry market, and the fish—whose liver oil will restore the sight of Tobias' father—looks fresh.



19.33. GIROLAMO SAVOLDO. *Tobias and the Angel.* Early 1530s. Canvas, 37³/4 × 49¹/2" (95.9 × 125.7 cm). Borghese Gallery, Rome.

Here miracles are achieved by figures who appear as if they are a natural part of everyday life.

Alessandro Bonvicino, called Moretto (c. 1498–1554), is a sturdy realist who grew to maturity in Brescia during Savoldo's absence and came to dominate the local scene. Like Savoldo, he began under the spell of Giorgione, but Moretto's devotion to fact soon took over, even in the realization of religious visions. His *Ecce Homo with Angel* (fig. 19.34) is not the customary representation of the tormented Jesus in his mock royal robe, crowned with thorns, and displayed by Pilate to the people of Jerusalem. Here it is a grieving angel, holding the seamless garment woven by Mary, who presents Christ to worshippers. Modeled with a combination of Michelangelesque grandeur and earthy



19.35. MORETTO. *Portrait of a Young Man* (Count Fortunato Martinengo Cesaresco?). c. 1542. Canvas, 3'8⅞" × 3'1" (1.14 × 0.94 m). National Gallery, London.



19.34. MORETTO. *Ecce Homo with Angel.* c. 1550–54. Canvas, 7'1¼" × 4'1¼" (2.14 × 1.25 m). Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.

realism, Christ sits across a step in a narrow staircase, perhaps a reference to the famous relic of the Scala Sancta, which had been brought to Rome from Jerusalem. The painting emphasizes Christ's physical torture and mental humiliation, but at the same time the stairway to Pilate's palace on which he is seated becomes the stairway to heaven. Thus the literalism of Moretto's art is raised to a level of spirituality that can be connected to his engagement with Catholic reform in northern Italy during this period.

For many Renaissance painters, especially in the smaller cities, portraiture was an important source of income and also—depending on the sitter—a possible opportunity for innovation. Moretto's *Portrait of a Young Man* (fig. 19.35) provides another contribution to our understanding of how Renaissance individualism could be expressed in works of art. The sitter has been tentatively identified as Count Fortunato Martinengo Cesaresco, a Brescian nobleman whose marriage in 1542 was perhaps commemorated by this portrait. That he thought of himself as a scholar and collector is indicated by the bronze inkwell in the shape of a foot and the ancient coins scattered near it, but

the more revealing aspect of the portrait is his concern that we understand his melancholic character. An inscription in Greek—another scholarly affectation—on his velvet cap states "Alas, I desire too much." That he already has a great deal is obvious in his black silk, gold-embroidered, and fur-trimmed clothing and the rich silk-and-gold brocade seen against a marble wall that provides the background. These possessions are, however, just foils for the lassitude of his pose, his elbow resting on two pink-velvet tasseled pillows, and the ennui of his expression. During the Renaissance, the melancholic personality was considered to be the most creative and was especially linked with artists and scholars—an association that dates back to antiquity. By assuming a melancholic pose and demeanor, Moretto's sitter was relating himself to some of the leading intellectuals of the day.

While portraits of craftsmen were common in the Netherlands, most Italian Renaissance portraits were commissioned by nobility or wealthy businesspeople. One remarkable exception is the *Portrait of a Tailor* (fig. 19.36) by Giovanni Battista Moroni (c. 1520/24–after 1578), a leading painter of Bergamo who also worked in other northern centers. While Moroni was trained in the workshop of Moretto and his early works show the impact of his master's composition and naturalism, his mature portraits are characterized by restraint in composition and color. The circumstances under which Moroni painted the portrait are unknown: perhaps the sitter was an admired friend whose trade and appearance the artist chose to commemorate as a fellow craftsman; perhaps, as is documented in later centuries, two individuals arranged a trade—maybe this portrait in exchange for a garment or two. The thoughtful nature of the tailor is evident in the manner in which he looks up from his work to focus his attention on the viewer. Like a modern tailor, he has used chalk to mark the outlines where he will cut; his left hand holds the black fabric, his right the scissors, their distance above the worktable indicated by their shadow on the wood surface. The crisp white of his ruffled collar and sleeves sets off the warm white of his jacket against the cool grey background, the elegance of his clothing suggesting his skill and his success at his chosen trade, while his short beard, mustache, and hair suggest a working man's efficiency. The modest codpiece expresses his masculinity. In rendering the tailor's jacket, Moroni used light strokes on dark for the areas in shadow, dark strokes on light for the areas that are fully lit. In this innovative and unexpected portrait of a working man there is no place for the aristocratic melancholy expressed in Moretto's portrait.

One of the most successful of northern Italian painters during this period was a woman, Sofonisba Anguissola (c. 1532–1625). During the Middle Ages, women played a role in the art of manuscript illumination, much of which was done in convents. Although lists of women illuminators are preserved, no surviving Italian manuscript can be specifically connected with a female artist. When panel and fresco painting began to flourish on the Italian peninsula, the secular *botteghe* where these works were created became part of the controlled world of male activity. The exclusionary nature of the guilds meant that women were generally prevented from practicing in the crafts and professions, and the need to study from the nude male model reinforced the exclusion of women. In the course of the sixteenth century, however, some women became active as artists and several achieved reputations beyond their hometowns. It is uncertain how much their artistic activity is due to changes in the social and intellectual status of women in society and the transformation of painting from a Mechanical to a Liberal Art in the course of the Cinquecento. Ancient sources supported the acceptance of women as professional artists: in his *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder had written, "Women too have been painters." At first women artists seem to have been considered something between an oddity and a miracle. Most achieved



19.36. GIOVANNI BATISTA MORONI. *Portrait of a Tailor.* c. 1570. Canvas, 39⅛ × 30⁵⁄₁₆" (99.5 × 77 cm). National Gallery, London.

their training by serving as assistants to their painter fathers; Sofonisba was the only successful woman painter of this era not trained at home.

Sofonisba was the eldest of six daughters of Amilcare Anguissola, a learned and noble gentleman in Cremona. She was named after a queen of ancient Tyre, and three of her five sisters were called Minerva, Europa, and Elena (after Helen of Troy). Amilcare brought two of his daughters to study the art of painting with Bernardino Campi, youngest of a dynasty of painters who controlled artistic life in Cremona. The sisters were also taught musical performance, languages, and literature, but Amilcare's particular emphasis on the art of painting may have had a practical basis, for he complained to Michelangelo of the difficulty of supporting six daughters in their appropriate station in life.

Amilcare wrote to Michelangelo in 1557, offering to have Sofonisba "color in oil" a drawing by Michelangelo, if he would so favor her. Amilcare apparently knew that in his last years Michelangelo made a practice of giving drawings to others to paint from, and judging from Amilcare's next letter, Michelangelo complied. Neither the drawing, the painting, nor Michelangelo's response to Sofonisba's work is preserved, but the reply seems to have been complimentary, as Amilcare thanked him profusely.

Sofonisba's output was mainly portraits, although a few religious subjects by her hand are also known. Most of Sofonisba's portraits appear to have been commissioned, and they must have provided a welcome addition to the family income. They are characterized by directness and penetration of character.

Anguissola also painted more than a dozen self-portraits. Some show her at the easel painting a representation of the Madonna and Child; such a scene is probably based on images of St. Luke, the patron saint of artists who, tradition held, had painted a portrait of Mary and the infant Christ from life. In others she shows herself playing an instrument or reading. One shows her with her husband and in yet another she depicts Bernardino Campi, her teacher, painting her portrait. Since the latter was conceived and painted by Sofonisba, it too must be considered a self-portrait. Why Anguissola painted so many self-portraits is revealed in a remark made by the contemporary poet and playwright Annibale Caro, who wrote "There is nothing I desire more than an image of the artist herself, so that in a single work I can exhibit two marvels, one the work, the other the artist." Evidently Anguissola's self-portraits were purchased and prized because they documented the novelty that was a woman artist in Renaissance Italy. Rather than demonstrating a self-referential focus, the quantity of Sofonisba's self-portraits reveals that she was responding to market demands.

The self-portrait by Anguissola discussed here is a miniature (fig. 19.37)—an important category of art during the sixteenth century since husbands, wives, and lovers carried miniatures of each other. Miniatures were given as gifts and collected by connoisseurs. As Vasari wrote, "Such works are not for public viewing, and cannot be seen by everyone, such as paintings, sculpture, and architecture by our other artists and artisans." This accolade appeared in his "Life of Giulio Clovio," an important miniaturist whose portrait Anguissola painted and with whom she may have studied the art of miniature painting.

The large medallion that Anguissola holds has proved difficult to interpret. The inscription around the edge identifies the artist/sitter as Sofonisba Anguissola from Cremona. The overlapped, decorative letters in the middle



19.37. SOFONISBA ANGUISSOLA. *Self-Portrait.* c. 1552.
Oil on parchment on cardboard, 3¼ × 2½" (8.3 × 6.4 cm).
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
It has been suggested that this miniature was intended to be a gift to the miniaturist Giulio Clovio.

have been interpreted as referring to her family name and the first letters of her sisters' names. Another, more likely theory is that the letters refer to a Latin phrase that identifies Sofonisba as a member of a noble Cremonese family and proclaims her as a virtuous artist.

Sofonisba is acknowledged as the inventor of a new type of group portraiture in which the sitters are not merely aligned and accompanied by conventional props, as was customary, but shown in lively activity. Her most famous work is her *Portrait of the Artist's Three Sisters with their Governess* (fig. 19.38). Group portraiture was still relatively rare at mid-century, as were paintings of everyday activities, and this painting successfully combines the two genres. It was probably not a commissioned work; perhaps Sofonisba found time for such an invention in a lull

between commissions. Sensitive to the interplay of intimacy and rivalry in a large household, Sofonisba concentrated on a single moment during a game of chess, which at the time was called "scacchi." An older sister on the left has made her move and turns for admiration to the artist and to us. The next oldest, planning a coup, searches her sister's unsuspecting face and raises her right hand for the devastating move. The youngest sister sees what is coming and laughs, while a governess looks on. While the poses are somewhat wooden, perhaps reflecting Sofonisba's exclusion from training in figure drawing, the painting is both ambitious in its efforts to create an animated moment and revolutionary in the mood of shared family experience that it conveys. That Sofonisba showed women engaged in a game that, in 1554, had been praised as requiring



19.38. SOFONISBA ANGUISSOLA. *Portrait of the Artist's Three Sisters with their Governess.* 1555. Oil on canvas, $27^5/8 \times 37"$ (70 × 94 cm). Narodowe Museum, Poznań.

Of this painting Vasari wrote: "I must relate that I saw this year in the house of her father at Cremona, in a picture executed with great diligence by her hand, portraits of her three sisters in the act of playing chess, and with them an old woman of the household, all done with such care and such spirit, that they have the appearance of being alive."

"brains, skill, and memory" is another indication of the forward-looking nature of this painting.

In Anguissola's paintings, the masses of the figures are convincing, and everything that propriety allows to emerge from the stiffness of sixteenth-century costume is carefully constructed. Anguissola's brushwork delineates every nuance of the faces and fabrics—a focus on detail that in the case of her family portrait serves to freeze the moment. In comparison to the loose brushwork being practiced at this time by Titian, the detail in her paintings seems to be a reference back to the Quattrocento. Conservative patrons and buyers who expected paintings that demonstrated skill in the rendering of visual reality must have found these works impressive.

Anguissola's accomplishments in the face of the difficulties she must have faced are impressive and speak of her determination to succeed in a period when the professional success of women was unexpected. Her fame during the Renaissance was widespread, and her works entered the collections of Pope Julius III and those of the Borghese, Este, Farnese, and Medici families during her lifetime. In 1558 Anguissola went on a voyage to Sicily, and the next year she was appointed lady-in-waiting to the queen of Spain, to whose territories both Cremona and Sicily belonged. While serving in Spain, she painted the king and queen and many members of the court in the restrained manner required by court etiquette there. She eventually returned to Sicily, where she died in 1625 at the age of ninety-two, the first internationally recognized woman artist of whom we have both certain knowledge and a large body of works.

## Tintoretto

In the middle and late Cinquecento, Tintoretto and Veronese challenged Titian for the leadership of the Venetian School. The older and more dramatic of these younger artists is Jacopo Robusti (1518–1594), called Tintoretto ("little dyer") after his father's trade as a dyer. Attempts have been made to identify Tintoretto's teacher, but his style is so original that no consensus has been reached. Carlo Ridolfi, who wrote about Tintoretto in the seventeenth century and had access to local traditions, states that he worked in the studio of Titian until the master saw one of the boy's drawings, inquired who did it, and ejected him from his house. To the end of his days, however, Tintoretto had an unrequited admiration for Titian, whom he considered his true teacher. Titian's contrary opinion of Tintoretto may have arisen partly from fear, for, as we shall see, this young man offered formidable competition to all artists seeking public commissions. But more likely Titian's distaste is attributable to fundamental incompatibilities of personality, stylistic aim, and method. Titian's careful craftsmanship, with its succession of glazes, and his distrust of his own unfinished paintings are the antithesis of Tintoretto's impetuosity.

We are told that in 1564, when artists competing for the commission of a ceiling painting in the Scuola di San Rocco in Venice arrived, as instructed, with their scale models, they were outraged to find that during the night Tintoretto had already installed his full-sized, completed painting in the intended location. This and other infractions of guild rules aroused hostility from artists and conservative elements of the citizenry. Nevertheless, Tintoretto's strategy worked, and he obtained many commissions. Although it made enemies for him, this spontaneity is an essential aspect of his style. Tintoretto's art offers fast-moving action and passionate emotion, both supported by the velocity of his execution.

A story is told about two Flemish artists, whose scrupulously detailed and polished drawings astonished the Venetian public. Tintoretto's response was to pick up a piece of unsharpened charcoal and in a matter of minutes, with a few rough, hooklike strokes, knock an action figure into abundant and astonishing life, whereupon he commented, "We poor Venetians can only draw like this." Tintoretto's preserved drawings (fig. 19.39) are almost exclusively in this hasty style, yet they were apparently accurate enough to serve as a basis for his compositions. According to Ridolfi, an inscription on the wall of Tintoretto's workshop proclaimed "The Color of Titian and the Drawing of Michelangelo," suggesting that his art was a combination of these two forces, although we never encounter detailed life studies in Michelangelo's manner by Tintoretto.

Tintoretto apparently had little patience with the time-consuming methods of Titian. He must have felt an overpowering urge to cover vast areas of canvas rapidly. Financial rewards, incidentally, seem to have had little to do with this desire, as he often underbid his competitors and is reported to have painted certain works for the cost of the materials alone. In order to speed up his production, Tintoretto primed his canvases with dark tones—gray-green, brown, or slate-gray—and sometimes even divided the priming into different color areas to correspond to the tonal divisions of the finished painting. From the sketches he then outlined figures on the priming, which served as the basic tone for the shadowed areas. Once the light areas were painted in with bright colors, creating an effect rather like drawing on a blackboard with colored chalks, the picture was virtually complete and needed only a few tonal refinements in crucial areas. As a result, the underlying dark dominates Tintoretto's pictures, which sometimes look as if the action were taking place in the middle of a

thunderstorm illuminated by sudden flashes of lightning. Unfortunately, in some canvases the dark underpainting has begun to bleed through, dimming the overlying colors.

Another time-saving device that Tintoretto used was the wide, square-ended brush introduced by Titian. Tintoretto's strokes, however, were so wide that the nineteenth-century critic John Ruskin accused him of painting with a broom. Today the vigor of Tintoretto's brushwork is a source of enjoyment, but there is evidence that in the late 1540s, when he introduced his new style at full intensity, some of his contemporaries dismissed his works as

deplorably hasty in execution. We are told that Tintoretto prearranged his compositions by posing small wax figures in wooden box-stages, sometimes hanging them from wires and turning them at angles to study the foreshortenings that play an important role in his dramatic technique. He even moved little lamps about to achieve vivid *chiaroscuro* contrasts. By means of a grid of horizontal and vertical threads or wires across the front of the box, Tintoretto could record his composition on squared paper in a relatively short time (fig. 19.39), and, using another grid, his pupils could enlarge it on the dark-primed canvas



19.39. TINTORETTO. *Study for a Bowman in the Capture of Zara.* Before 1585. Black chalk, 14³⁄₈ × 8⁵⁄₈" (36 × 22 cm). Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

in a matter of hours, ready for their master to paint in the lighted areas. Tintoretto's daughter, Marietta Robusti, was an important member of the workshop and apparently also executed works of her own design, but no pictures can be certainly attributed to her, nor can her hand be definitively identified within her father's production.

If Tintoretto had died at an early age, he would have remained an art-historical curiosity. His first serious threat to Titian and his followers was *St. Mark Freeing a Christian Slave*, painted for the Scuola Grande di San Marco (fig. 19.40). According to legend, the slave of a knight of Provence left without permission to go to Alexandria to venerate the relics of St. Mark. On his return, his master decided to punish him by having his eyes gouged out and his legs broken with hammers, but St. Mark himself came down from heaven to liberate the slave. At the right, the knight is about to fall off his throne with surprise, while on the ground the foreshortened figure of the slave is surrounded by broken ropes and miraculously smashed hardware. A wave of astonished servants, executioners, and bystanders, at once moving away and looking backward and down, flank the saint. At the top, St. Mark zooms downward into the picture. Together with a turbaned servant lifting a broken hammer this figure forms a kind of pinwheel composition in depth—the basis for many of Tintoretto's cyclonic compositions.

The colors of *St. Mark Freeing a Christian Slave* blaze against the dark shadows, and the brushwork of the drapery, glittering armor, sparkling curls, and faces throbbing with emotion becomes a vivid record of the painter's gestures. Restoration has revealed that this work was originally an octagonal ceiling painting, and that the artist



19.40. TINTORETTO. *St. Mark Freeing a Christian Slave.* 1548. Canvas, 13'7" × 17'10" (4.16 × 5.44 m). Accademia, Venice. Commissioned by the head of the Confraternity of S. Marco for the Scuola Grande di S. Marco. Our illustration shows the original shape of the painting, with its corners truncated to form an octagonal shape.

placed figures diagonally so that they are parallel or perpendicular to the angles of the corners.

The picture was controversial when it was unveiled in 1548. Although the poet Pietro Aretino supported it, adverse criticism emanating largely from the workshop of Titian caused Tintoretto to take his picture back. He kept it in his workshop for several years but later returned it to the *scuola*, and in 1562 the *scuola*'s guardian, Tommaso Rangone of Ravenna, offered to pay for three more pictures to continue the Legend of St. Mark. One of these represents the *Transport of the Body of St. Mark* (fig. 19.41). Captured by non-believers, the saint was dragged through the streets of Alexandria for two days until he died. As they were about to burn his body (note the pyre in the background), a storm broke, the captors fled, and the Christians were able to carry the body reverently to burial.

Tintoretto set the scene in a long paved square not unlike the Piazza San Marco in Venice, yet another indication of the self-referentiality of Venetian art; the suggestion is that the body of the saint is being carried toward San Marco, where it will be respectfully interred. The orthogonals formed by the paving stones and arcades recede rapidly into the distance, while the little band of followers, about to load the body onto a camel, emerge at the right. The tension in depth created by the emphasis on dramatic recession, appearing here for the first time in Tintoretto's art, became a standard compositional device in his mature and late works, as frequent as the pinwheel and sometimes combined with it. The perspective is accurate enough as far as the orthogonals go, but the arches, possibly painted by pupils, do not coordinate with the rest of the setting. This is the kind of detail that Tintoretto allowed to pass and that
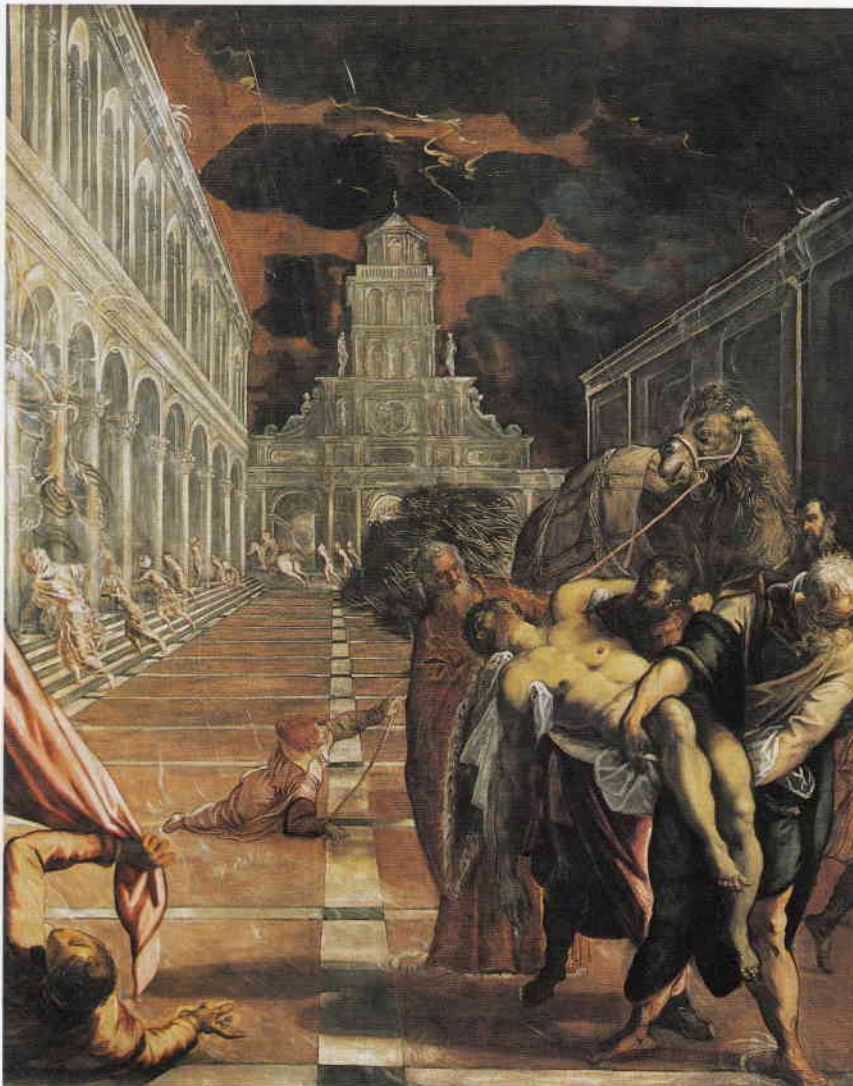


19.41. TINTORETTO. *Transport of the Body of St. Mark*. 1562–66. Canvas, 13'10" × 10' (4.2 × 3 m). Accademia, Venice. Commissioned by Tommaso Rangone for the Scuola Grande di S. Marco.

must have infuriated other artists. But his foreshortening of the figures, the rapidity of their action, and the rush of the captors for shelter under the arcade demonstrate his power. Had Tintoretto tried to paint them slowly, they would have been both less effective and less spontaneous. And if the lightning is a trifle stagy, the rush of water across the stones of the piazza is convincing. Rangone, in the gown of a Venetian patrician, is shown gently supporting the head of the saint on his chest, while Tintoretto painted his own bearded features just to the right of the camel's neck.

Tintoretto's crowning achievement is a cycle of some fifty paintings for the Scuola di San Rocco and its neighboring church (fig. 19.42). Most of these paintings were executed between 1564 and 1587. His *Crucifixion* in the Sala dell'Albergo (fig. 19.43) presents a panorama of Golgotha populated by a crowd of soldiers, executioners, horsemen, and apostles. At the left, the cross of the penitent thief is being partly lifted, partly tugged into place by ropes; at the right the unrepentant thief is about to be tied to his cross. A soldier on a ladder behind Christ reaches down to take the reed with the sponge soaked in vinegar from another soldier on the ground. The tumult of the crowd, the grief of the apostles, and the yearning of the penitent thief seem to come to a focus in the head of Christ.

Owing to Tintoretto's light-on-dark technique, his figures sometimes have a tendency to look a bit ghostly, but the foreground figures in the *Crucifixion*, grouped in a massive pyramid at the base of the cross, are defined by vigorous contours and modeled to create a strong sculptural effect. Tintoretto's interest in expression is evident in the head of Joseph of Arimathea, who, holding his hands crossed on his breast, looks with sympathy at the Virgin swooning under the cross. The little group, huddled as if for protection against the hostile crowds, forms the base of the composition.

For the Sala Grande on the upper story, the *scuola*'s theological advisers devised a scheme relating Old and New Testament subjects to each other and to the *scuola*'s charitable goals. Although each scene is part of an iconographic and formal totality, each also functions as an individual image. Because *Moses Striking Water from the Rock* (fig. 19.44) is a ceiling painting, the reproduction should be held overhead to appreciate more fully Tintoretto's method. We look up along the diagonals of the square,



19.42. Sala Grande of the Scuola di S. Rocco, Venice, with paintings by TINTORETTO. Commissioned by the Brotherhood of S. Rocco. The ceiling of the Sala Grande was painted in 1575–77 and the walls in 1577–81 (see figs. 19.44–19.45).

19.43. TINTORETTO. *Crucifixion.* 1565. Canvas, 17'7" × 40'2" (5.4 × 12.3 m). 🏛 Sala dell'Albergo, Scuola di S. Rocco, Venice. Commissioned by the Brotherhood of S. Rocco.



19.44. TINTORETTO. *Moses Striking Water from the Rock.* 1575–77. Canvas, 18'2½" × 17'2¾" (5.6 × 5.3 m). 🏛 Sala Grande, Scuola di S. Rocco, Venice. Commissioned by the Brotherhood of S. Rocco.

19.45. TINTORETTO. *Nativity*. 1577–81.
Canvas, height 17'9" (5.4 m). 🏛 Sala Grande,
Scuola di S. Rocco, Venice. Commissioned by
the Brotherhood of S. Rocco.

past a series of foreshortened figures, to the miracle on which the figures converge: water pouring in arcs of light at the touch of Moses' rod. The illusion suggests that the water would fall on our heads were it not for the intervening receptacles. At the upper right corner, God the Father floats into the picture, partly enclosed in a circle of light. The composition is built on the opposition between the movement of the figures on the one hand, and the arcs, the heavenly circle, and the smaller circles of the bowls on the other.

In the scenes of the Sala Grande, Tintoretto's light-on-dark technique imparts a shadowy and diaphanous appearance to the figures, even when he devoted some attention to modeling an occasional important face or limb. The light areas surrounding silhouetted dark heads often seem more solid than the heads themselves. In some scenes, the principal figures are raised to an upper level. In the *Nativity* (fig. 19.45), for example, the shepherds, a woman, and some animals are below, while the Holy

Family and two more women huddle in the hayloft above, illuminated by the light coming through the rafters and the ruined roof. Here, as in other San Rocco compositions, the diagonal poses complement and continue the diagonals established for the space by the perspective orthogonals.

Tintoretto was responsible for several hundred works that still survive, as well as for a considerable number that perished in a fire that gutted the Doge's Palace in Venice in 1577. To replace an earlier fresco of the same subject lost in the fire, Tintoretto, his son Domenico, and his assistants created a huge representation of *Paradise* in the palace's Hall of the Great Council (see fig. 19.54). Here, as in many of the works of Titian's last years, both material substance and worldly concerns seem to dissolve before our eyes, and in the darkness of his paintings a transcendent light shines.

One of Tintoretto's last works, finished in the year of his death, is the *Last Supper* he made for San Giorgio Maggiore (fig. 19.46), where its otherworldliness contrasts with the architectural setting by Palladio (see figs.

19.46. TINTORETTO. *Last Supper.* 1592–94. Canvas, 12' × 18'8" (3.7 × 5.7 m). ☫ S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice. Probably commissioned by Michele Alabardi, prior of S. Giorgio Maggiore.



19.66–19.68). The painting is placed on the side wall to the right of the free-standing high altar, and its dynamism in this setting is demonstrated in figure 19.47. The long table, set on a diagonal in depth, divides the material from the spiritual. To the right of the diagonal, servants gather up the remains of the feast and stack the dishes in a basket, where they attract the interest of a cat. A dog crunches a bone at the foot of the table. Another servant (distinguished as such by his clothing and his cap, although the figure might be Judas) sits on the floor with his elbow on the table, trying to understand what he sees. But behind the table the emphasis is on the light of the spirit, which surrounds the heads of the eleven apostles, bursts in rays from the head of Christ as he stands to give Communion,

19.47. Photograph of fig. 19.46 in situ in S. Giorgio Maggiore (see figs. 19.66–19.67).

streams from the flames of the hanging lamp, and floats in wisps that assume the shapes of angels—heavenly ministers who contrast with the worldly servants. At the end of his life, Tintoretto's light-on-dark technique, invented to lend speed to his brush, becomes a vehicle for revelation.

## Paolo Veronese

The second of the aged Titian's competitors was Paolo Caliari (1528–1588), called Paolo Veronese because of his birth and training in Verona. He came to Venice in 1553, and for the next thirty-five years delighted the Venetians with his style, which in some ways seems to be diametrically opposed to that of Tintoretto. Veronese, too, painted biblical suppers, but his concern was with material splendor and sumptuous costumes. In his canvases, contemporary Venice passes before our eyes in a parade of marble palaces and healthy people, dressed in velvets, satins, and brocades, eating, drinking, and making love with the stolid conviction that this was all they were meant to do in this world. In his festivals and pageants, Veronese offered a bouquet of high and clear hues, dominated by the pale tones of marble columns and by lemon yellows, light blues, silvery whites, and delicate salmon.

Looking a little more deeply into Veronese, one encounters two surprises. First, as Carlo Ridolfi wrote sixty years



19.48. PAOLO VERONESE. *Triumph of Mordecai.* 1556. Canvas, 24 × 18' (7.3 × 5.5 m). 🏛 S. Sebastiano, Venice. Commissioned by Bernardo Torlioni, prior of S. Sebastiano. Veronese is buried in this church, where his tomb is surrounded by his paintings.

after the artist's death, Veronese was a model of rectitude and piety who brought up his sons according to severe religious and moral principles. Though he "wore expensive clothes and velvet shoes," he lived "far from luxury: was parsimonious in his expenses, whereby he had the money to acquire many farms and to accumulate riches and furnishings." Second, Veronese seems to have been as impatient as Tintoretto with Titian's time-consuming methods and, like Tintoretto, invented a shorthand style of execution.

Veronese often achieved a kind of intoxication through color. Establishing the basic masses of his architectural settings, he subdivided the remaining fields into areas, each of which was covered with a layer of bright underpaint, giving Veronese his ground color and allowing him to see exactly its relationship to the adjoining hue. Once these layers dried, he could add a system of simplified highlights in a modified version of the same hue or in a contrasting hue to give a hint of iridescence while at the same time avoiding shadows. This method enabled Veronese to paint the specifics of drapery and architecture rapidly, and yet with a seeming accuracy of detail which, to the viewer's surprise, vanishes at close range. He maintained a level of visual observation that keeps observers standing a certain distance from his canvases so that they are always aware of the total decorative effect. By these means, Veronese was able to create a number of large canvases without any appearance of haste.

Two years after his arrival in Venice, Veronese began the decorative series—frescoes, altarpiece, ceiling paintings, and organ shutters—that transformed the church of San Sebastiano into a dazzling display of Venetian painting by a single artist. He decorated the central ceiling oval with the *Triumph of Mordecai* (fig. 19.48) as part of the story of the Old Testament heroine Esther that expresses the victory of faith over heresy. He envisioned the biblical scene (Esther 8:15) as if it were happening in a Renaissance city: "And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city ... rejoiced and was glad." Veronese's painting of mighty steeds, spiral columns, and balconies with figures shown against the blue sky is a daring demonstration of *di sotto in sù* illusionism. Like Mantegna (see fig. 15.26), whose murals in Mantua he may have studied, Veronese played tricks on the spectator; we instinctively duck from the threatening hooves. The drama is heightened by the crumbling brickwork in the foreground.

Veronese went to Rome in 1560, but his trip had little effect on his style beyond his quotation of an occasional ancient motif. In the frescoes he painted at the Villa Barbaro at Maser, he accommodated his illusionistic designs to Palladio's architecture (see figs. 19.64–19.65). The iconographic program of Veronese's decoration, which may have been designed by the patron, Daniele Barbaro, is replete with symbolism and learned references. There are many brilliant *trompe l'oeil* effects, with painted figures that seem to look down from balconies or peek through partially open doors (fig. 19.49). There are also Barbaro family portraits and landscapes both idyllic and naturalistic, some portraying laborers working in the fields. In his ceiling fresco of *Wisdom, with the Seven*



19.49. PAOLO VERONESE. Fresco cycle. Crociera, Villa Barbaro, Maser. 1560–62. Commissioned by Marcantonio and Daniele Barbaro for their villa designed by Palladio (see figs. 19.64–19.65).
The female figure with the musical instrument probably represents a muse. The *trompe l'oeil* architectural setting may be the work of Benedetto Caliari, Veronese's brother and assistant.

*Planetary Gods* (fig. 19.50), he paid tribute to Raphael's *Cupid Pointing Out Psyche to the Three Graces* (see fig. 17.73) while again adapting his figures to a *di sotto in sù* view. The high, silvery clouds recall those in the early works of Titian.

The largest of Veronese's scenes of feasting is the *Marriage at Cana* (fig. 19.51), painted for the refectory of San Giorgio Maggiore. Perhaps Tintoretto's spiritualized *Last Supper*, painted for the chancel of the same church a generation later, was in part a reaction to the work's emphasis on material splendor. Veronese's table is laid on an open terrace, with flanking Roman Doric colonnades and a higher terrace at the back, set off by a balustrade, beyond which one looks out to a *campanile* and clouds. One hardly notices Christ and Mary in the midst of so much architecture, so many brocaded garments and good things to eat and drink on the table. The master of the feast, at the base of the large column to the left, directs operations, a black youth hands a glass of wine to a guest, and a cat at the right rolls over to scratch a mask on the amphora in which the wine is stored. The group of musicians in the center includes portraits of the painter Jacopo Bassano (see fig. 19.56) with a viol, Veronese himself with a viola da braccio, and Titian with a bass viol. If anybody is concerned about the miracle that has just taken place, the spectator would never know it.

Ten years later, another refectory painting, apparently commissioned as a representation of the Last Supper, landed Veronese in trouble (fig. 19.52). He was brought before the Inquisition and, in a trial of which the record is still preserved, asked to account for the presence in the painting of "buffoons, drunkards, dwarfs, Germans, and similar vulgarities." Veronese countered that he was taking advantage of a kind of license granted to poets, painters, and madmen. The trial ended when Veronese agreed to call the painting the *Feast in the House of Levi*, a subject that would give him the freedom to leave in the offending figures, including a drunk soldier on the stairs at the right.

To clarify this new subject, Paolo inscribed "lucae cap. v" (Luke, Chapter 5) on the balustrade, referring to a passage that includes: "And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publi-

cans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, 'Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?' And Jesus answering said unto them, 'They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick'" (Luke 5:29–31). Christ sits in the center, chatting with the publicans and their attendants. Shades of rose, yellow, blue, green, and silver dazzle against the pale stone and the blue of the sky with its sultry clouds. Veronese's architectural setting is reminiscent of the opulent contemporary architecture developed by Jacopo Sansovino (see fig. 19.60), with veined marble columns for the smaller order and gilded Victories in the spandrels.

Veronese's *Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine* (fig. 19.53) is festive, but it lacks the mysticism inherent in the subject. The Virgin is seated at the top of three steps, between massive columns seen diagonally, somewhat like those Titian introduced into his Pesaro *Madonna* (see fig. 19.15). The sun warms the columns and the splendid fabrics, as well as the angel's heads and the swooping *putti* (recalling those in Titian's *Rape of Europa*, see fig. 19.24) who hold the Virgin's crown and the saint's palm. Veronese emphasizes Catherine's status as a princess by dressing her in beautiful damask. His juxtaposed hues are at their best in the pair of angels seated at the lower left-hand corner; few passages in Venetian painting can rival the white-and-gold brocade, green silk, and heavy orange taffeta of their garments.



19.50. PAOLO VERONESE. *Wisdom, with the Seven Planetary Gods*. 1560–62. Fresco. Ceiling of the Salone, Villa Barbaro, Maser. The program of the vault is allegorical and based on the ancient gods. The figure in the center, a personification of Wisdom, is surrounded by the seven planetary gods. The figures in the four diagonal corners are Juno, Vulcan, Cybele, and Neptune, representing the Four Elements. The lunettes at the corners represent Venus, Vulcan, Ceres, and Bacchus, as the Four Seasons.

19.51. PAOLO VERONESE. *Marriage at Cana.* 1563. Canvas, 21'10" × 32'6" (6.7 × 10 m). The Louvre, Paris. Commissioned for the refectory of the Benedictine Monastery of S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice (see figs. 19.66–19.68).



19.52. PAOLO VERONESE. *Feast in the House of Levi.* 1573. Canvas, 18'3" × 42' (5.6 × 12.8 m). Accademia, Venice. Commissioned for the refectory of the Dominican monastery of SS. Giovanni e Paolo; the patron was probably Andrea Buono, a friar at the monastery.

19.53. PAOLO VERONESE. *Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine*. Probably 1570s. Canvas, 12'5" × 7'11" (3.8 × 2.4 m). Accademia, Venice. Commissioned for the high altar of S. Caterina, Venice.

One of Veronese's most astonishing works is his dramatic *Apotheosis of Venice*, also known as *Pax Veneta* (*Venetian Peace*; figs. 19.54–19.55), on the ceiling of the Hall of the Great Council in the Doge's Palace. We look upward at a great triumphal arch with spiral columns, in front of which the sceptered figure of Venice is supported on clouds. She is flanked by other allegorical figures and enthroned between the towers of the Arsenale, from which Venetian galleys sailed forth to dominate the seas (see fig. 15.56). Venetian citizens throng below, watching as Venice is crowned by Victory and celebrated by Fame at the top, with her trumpet. While Tintoretto's late *Last Supper* took us into a world of personal mysticism, Veronese's composition leads to the Baroque and the ceiling painters of the seventeenth century, who studied its principles and experimented with the possibilities of its daring flight.



19.54. Hall of the Great Council, Doge's Palace, Venice. The oval ceiling painting visible here is the 🏛 *Apotheosis of Venice (Pax Veneta)*, by Veronese and pupils (see fig. 19.55). The end wall painting is 🏛 *Paradise*, by Tintoretto and pupils. 1585–90. Commissioned by the city government of Venice after the great fire of 1577.

19.55. PAOLO VERONESE and pupils. *Apotheosis of Venice* (see fig. 19.54). Probably 1585. Canvas, 29'8" × 19' (9 × 5.8 m).
🏛 Hall of the Great Council, Doge's Palace, Venice.

## Jacopo Bassano

Jacopo dal Ponte (c. 1515–1592) was called Bassano after the picturesque north Italian town where he was born and died. He was part of a dynasty of painters that started with his father, Francesco, who specialized in paintings of peasant life, and later included Jacopo's four sons. After escaping the limited possibilities of his hometown for Venice, Jacopo seems to have fallen under the influence of both Titian and the courtly style being practiced in Florence, perhaps through Francesco Salviati (see fig. 20.37), who visited Venice in 1536.

The popularity of Jacopo Bassano's work in sixteenth-century Venice proves that not all the republic's citizens were interested in the visual splendor offered by Titian and Veronese. Bassano's work emphasized a kind of rustic naturalism in the details that may have seemed refreshing. In his *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 19.56), the attenuated Virgin and magi radiate the princely splendor of the Venetian society for whom Bassano painted, but the naturalistic setting, the darkness of the encompassing shadows, and the treatment of dogs, horses, and donkey immerse the story's protagonists in the real world. The rustic shed is a standard motif in this scene, but Bassano emphasized the unusually ragged forms of his creation by placing it against a cloud-filled Venetian sky.

It was apparently a Venetian tradition for painters to include portraits of each other in their compositions, and just as Veronese included Bassano as a viol player in his *Marriage at Cana* (see fig. 19.51), Bassano represented Titian as a money-changer in his *Purification of the Temple* (not illustrated)—a portrait that may be less than complementary.

## Michele Sanmicheli

Although Bramante's classical tradition was continued in the cities of northern Italy by several talented architects, the Roman version of the High Renaissance style was imported to the north only by artists who had experienced the new grand manner in full operation in the Rome of Julius II and Leo X. One of these was Michele Sanmicheli (1484–1559), an architect from Verona who worked from 1509 to 1521 at the cathedral of Orvieto and who, in 1526, collaborated with Antonio da Sangallo the Younger in a survey of papal fortifications. On his return to Verona after the Sack of Rome in 1527, Sanmicheli began constructing fortifications ornamented with splendid Renaissance gates, and Renaissance palaces and churches that transformed this Gothic city into one of the richest centers of Renaissance architecture in northern Italy. While based on the general principles of Bramante's Palazzo Caprini (see fig. 17.19), with a rusticated lower story and a columned *piano nobile*, Sanmicheli's Palazzo Bevilacqua (fig. 19.57) and his other palaces are strikingly original



19.56. JACOPO BASSANO. *Adoration of the Magi.* c. 1563–64. Canvas, 37 × 46" (94 × 116.6 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.



19.57. MICHELE SANMICHELI. Palazzo Bevilacqua, Verona. c. 1532–33.

and often include references to details of the Roman monuments still standing in Verona.

As in the Roman palaces by Giulio Romano, the ground-floor pilasters of the Palazzo Bevilacqua are rusticated, but here they are so completely encased in heavy blocks that only the capitals escape. On the *piano nobile* large arches alternate with smaller ones surmounted by pediments and rectangular attic windows. This combination of interlocked architectural motifs contrasts with sculpted figures, heads, and garlands across the top of the structure. While four of the eight columns have vertical fluting, the other four have spiral fluting—a motif derived from late Roman architecture but unusual in the Renaissance. Two run clockwise and two counterclockwise, and they are arranged in pairs so that a clockwise example is paired with a counterclockwise one. The overall effect is one of disturbing complexity.

One of Sanmicheli's most impressive works is the highly ornamented Pellegrini Chapel (fig. 19.58), commissioned by Margarita Pellegrini as a funerary chapel for herself and her son, who died at the age of eighteen in 1528; her daughter was subsequently buried there as well. Noticeably absent is Margarita's husband, Benedetto Raimundi de' Guareschi, who was wealthy but of inferior social status; his coat of arms, which was also that of their son, is less important in the chapel's decoration than the arms of the Pellegrini. The scale and elaborate decoration of the Pellegrini Chapel were clearly intended to establish the continuing importance of Margarita's family in Verona. Documents reveal that Margarita, who was only one of a number of Italian women who commissioned architectural monuments in the later Cinquecento and early Seicento, was an engaged patron and played a significant role in advising Sanmicheli over the course of the three decades needed to design and build the chapel. The centralized plan features a vestibule that leads into a tall cylinder with three niches containing altars beneath a coffered dome with a lantern. The abundant decorative motifs (fig. 19.59), with spirally fluted columns, rich garlands, balustrades, and



19.58. MICHELE SANMICHELI. Section of Pellegrini Chapel, S. Bernardino, Verona. 1529–57. Engraving by B. Giuliari (from *La cappella della famiglia Pellegrini*, Verona, 1816). Chapel commissioned by Margarita Pellegrini, who dedicated it to St. Anne, patron saint of childbirth and mothers.
Margarita Pellegrini's will of 1534 speaks of the chapel's "most perfect and most dignified beauty," while a later will establishes an endowment "so that a work of such superlative beauty may be maintained in its laudable state and be decorously conserved."



19.59. View of the dome and the stucco decoration of fig. 19.58.

bold rosettes in the coffers of the dome, were based on ancient Roman monuments that Sanmicheli had studied in Rome and Verona.

## Jacopo Sansovino

By virtue of its succession of palaces, the Grand Canal in Venice is one of the most beautiful thoroughfares in the world. Not one of its Renaissance palaces, however, was built by an architect born in Venice. The tradition of imported architects began in the Early Renaissance with palaces designed and built by such Lombard architects as the Lombardo family and Mauro Codussi (see figs. 15.57–15.59). The High Renaissance Venetian palace was the invention of a Florentine, Jacopo Tatti (1486–1570), who was called Sansovino after his teacher, Andrea Sansovino, and who, before he came to Venice, was active mostly as a sculptor. The magnificence and authority of Jacopo's classical style laid down the principles on which Venetian architecture would proceed for the next two centuries.

When Sansovino arrived in Venice in 1527 after fleeing the Sack of Rome, he brought with him the High Renaissance style of Bramante, Raphael, and Baldassare Peruzzi.

While Florence, with its narrow streets and its tradition of fortress-palaces, could offer only limited opportunities to an architect brought up on Roman columns, arches, and balconies, Venice was free from such restrictions. The lagoons protected the city, so public and private buildings could exploit the advantages of light and air. Venetian palaces in various styles, from the Romanesque-Byzantine through the Gothic and Early Renaissance, present to the Grand Canal a series of wide windows and superimposed open arcades built of white limestone, their luminosity imparting a special brilliance to the Venetian scene (see fig. 15.59). Here Sansovino's Roman architectural heritage could be allowed an almost ideal freedom of expression.

Sansovino's Library of San Marco (fig. 19.60) was established to shelter the manuscripts left to the republic by Cardinal Bessarion, a Greek humanist and the patriarch of Constantinople who became a Latin prelate. Sansovino was apparently inspired in part by the ancient author Pausanias' description of the marble library of the Roman emperor Hadrian. The writings of Vitruvius, whose architectural treatise was known in a Venetian edition of 1511, may also have influenced the decision to situate the reading room to face the morning light. Sansovino's ground-story arcade is in the Roman Doric order, based on



19.60. JACOPO SANSOVINO. Library of S. Marco and Zecca, Venice. Zecca 1536–45; library begun 1537. Zecca commissioned by the Council of Ten; library commissioned by the Procurators of St. Mark's. The Zecca (far left) was transformed by the addition of a third story in 1558–66. In 1554 construction on the library was interrupted, only to be resumed after Sansovino's death in 1570 by his pupil Vincenzo Scamozzi. Nonetheless, the work was continued with fidelity to Jacopo's designs, and the library stands as a unified monument.

that of the Colosseum but with the addition of extensive decoration: keystones are carved into alternating masks and lions' heads and recumbent figures fill the spandrels. In the taller, Ionic second story, the engaged columns on high bases, like the second-story columns of Bramante's Palazzo Caprini (see fig. 17.19), support an entablature with a frieze of *putti* and garlands that hides a half-story of mezzanine windows. Each arch is flanked by pairs of fluted columns that are two-thirds the height of the smooth larger columns. The pairing of these smaller columns in depth creates an effect of plastic richness that is increased by the figures of the spandrels and friezes. Verticals are accented: at the corners are piers articulated by pilasters, and the balustrade that crowns the structure is divided by bases that support statues and obelisks thus prolonging the line from the ground to the apex, with an effect comparable to that of the pinnacles marking the divisions of Gothic buildings. The open balustrade, statues, and obelisks replace the traditional unbroken cornice that had been a key feature in Renaissance design, and serve to dissolve the top of the building as it confronts and incorporates the Venetian sky. Other traditional boundaries are also dissolved: no walls are apparent on either story, only clusters of columns and piers. The mass of the building encloses the shadows of the ground-story portico and upper-story windows. Palladio called the building "probably the richest ever built from the days of the ancients up to now," and Pietro Aretino pronounced it "superior to envy."

For the Mint of the Republic of Venice, the Zecca (fig. 19.60, far left), Sansovino created an effect of impregnability by interrupting the columns with rusticated bands—an idea derived from the Porta Maggiore, one of the ancient city gates of Rome. The mint was originally erected with two stories, but Sansovino had to add a protective third story required by the heat of the foundries. The effect is imposing, and although some of the horizontals continue those of the neighboring Library of San Marco, the proportions of the Zecca are deliberately kept separate from the library's luxurious beauty.

The most highly decorated Renaissance structure in Piazza San Marco was Sansovino's Loggetta, a small porticoed and terraced structure attached to the base of the Campanile (fig. 19.61). The delicate scale of the structure is enhanced by the use of polychrome marble and smaller than life-sized bronze sculptures. The name seems a misnomer today until we realize that the central entrance and flanking windows were originally open. Aretino reported that this structure served, appropriately, as a casual meeting place for the nobility of the city. Sansovino was also responsible for the sculpture that decorates the niches—a series of slender, elegant figures that represent Apollo, Mercury, Pallas Athena, and Peace.



19.61. JACOPO SANSOVINO. Loggetta at the base of the Campanile of S. Marco, Venice. 1535–c. 1542. Multicolored marble with bronze gate and sculpture. Commissioned by the Procurators of S. Marco. When the Campanile collapsed in the early twentieth century, it fortunately did not seriously damage the Loggetta.

# Andrea Palladio

Andrea di Pietro (1508–1580) is known by the name Palladio—derived from Pallas Athena, goddess of wisdom—bestowed by his patron, the humanist Giangiorgio Trissino. Palladio was brought up in Vicenza, which he turned into one of the most beautiful cities in Italy through buildings designed in a new, more archaeological version of the Renaissance style. Trissino took Palladio to Rome with him, where the young architect studied the works of the High Renaissance architects and the ruins of antiquity. Palladio also mastered the writings of Vitruvius and Alberti and made influential literary contributions of his own, including *The Antiquities of Rome* (*L'antichità di Roma*), printed in 1554, and *The Four Books on Architecture* (*I quattro libri dell'architettura*), which appeared in 1570. In the latter, the *virtus* of Roman art, so important a principle to Alberti (see p. 239), is applied to the architectural problems—domestic, public, and religious—of Palladio's own day.

Palladio's most influential building for the history of domestic architecture is the Villa Almerico (fig. 19.62), now known as the Villa Rotonda, a rural retreat sited on a low hill near Vicenza. "The site is one of the most pleasing and delightful that one could find ... because it enjoys the most beautiful vistas on each side," Palladio wrote, "some of which are restricted, others more extensive, and yet others which end at the horizon." Like most of the villas designed by Palladio, the building is organized around a classical temple portico, but the Villa Rotonda is unique in having four such porticoes, one facing each cardinal point of the compass (fig. 19.63). Each commands a different



19.62. PALLADIO. Villa Almerico, now known as Villa Rotonda or Villa Capra, Vicenza. Begun 1550. Completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi. Commissioned by Paolo Almerico.
On the siting of a country villa, Palladio wrote:
  It seems to me particularly relevant to discuss the site and location to be chosen for those buildings and their planning; since we are not (as is usually the case in towns) enclosed by fixed and predetermined boundaries such as public walls and those of neighbors, it is the business of the sensible architect to investigate and assess a convenient and healthy location with the greatest care and diligence, because we stay in the country mainly in the summer when our bodies grow weak and sick because of the heat even in the healthiest spots.
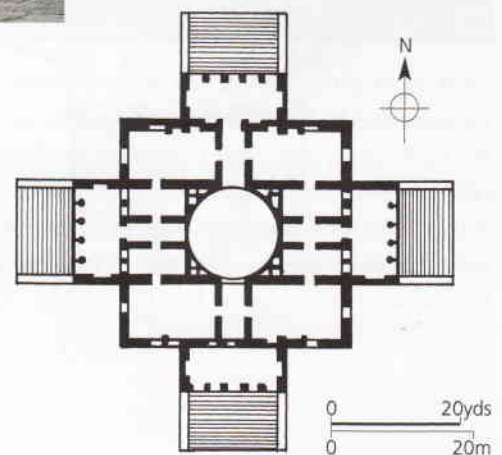


19.63. Plan of fig. 19.62.

view and enjoys different atmospheric qualities. Each is protected on the sides by diaphragm walls that ward off the sun but are pierced by an arch to admit ventilation; the inhabitants could thus take advantage of an almost endless variety of sun or shade, breeze or shelter. It is no wonder that Palladio's ideas were adopted with special enthusiasm in the architecture of plantation mansions in the American South, where protection against the sun was essential.

Each portico is reached by steps flanked by projecting walls. On the corners of these walls and on each pediment, statues extend the axes of the villa. Yet despite these details, the effect of the villa is austere, with its flat walls, severe Ionic columns, and undecorated frieze. It has been demonstrated that, like many earlier architects, Palladio used the numerical ratios of the harmonic relationships of the Greek musical scales, known in theory during the Renaissance, to calculate the proportional relationships in and between the rooms in his villas. More elaborate than those of Brunelleschi or Alberti, Palladio's ratios are not consciously discerned by the observer, but are responsible for the effect of harmony and balance so evident in his buildings.

The Villa Barbaro at Maser (figs. 19.64–19.65) was the modest main building for a small working farm. The flanking wings extending into the landscape, which influenced Thomas Jefferson's plan for his country estate at Monticello, had a practical rather than a theoretical or ideological basis. As at the Villa Rotonda, the main façade is based on an ancient temple façade, but here the entablature is unexpectedly broken by garlands decorating a large balconied window that allows the patrons a view over pastures and farmlands. The arcaded wings to either side culminate in large sundials and structures that suggest dovecotes. A semicircular nymphaeum behind the villa has a spring-fed cascade, a fish pond, a grotto, fountains, and extensive sculptural decoration. The water from this pond originally flowed into the kitchen and then out to a series of fountains in front of the villa, ending as irrigation for



19.64. PALLADIO. Façade, Villa Barbaro, Maser. 1550s. Commissioned by Daniele and Marcantonio Barbaro as a rebuilding of a family estate, some of the foundations of which were incorporated into Palladio's design. Palladio seems to have become a member of the Barbaro household staff, and when Daniele Barbaro died, his will mentioned "Palladio, our architect." For views of Veronese's decoration for the interior, see figs. 19.49–19.50.
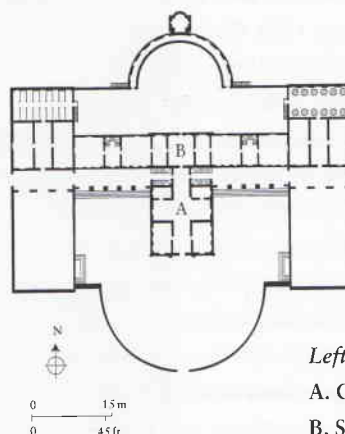


*Left:* 19.65. Plan of fig. 19.64.
A. Crociera (see fig. 19.49).
B. Salone (see fig. 19.50).

the farm's orchards. Unfortunately, the extensive farm gardens and orchards of the Villa Barbaro do not survive.

The elaborate sculptural decoration in stucco that adds elegance and focus to the façade of Villa Barbaro was in part designed and executed by Marcantonio Barbaro, who, with Daniele Barbaro, was one of the villa's patrons; a main feature of the pedimental decoration is the Barbaro coat of arms. The brothers were powerful Venetian aristocrats—Daniele a papal prelate and Marcantonio a prominent statesman—with a strong interest in the arts. Daniele authored an annotated edition of the writings of Vitruvius published in 1556 with illustrations by Palladio, while Marcantonio played a continuing role in Venetian building and sculptural projects until his death in 1595. The involvement of both brothers with architecture supports the assertion that they collaborated with Palladio on certain details of the villa's design. In 1560–62 the painter Veronese decorated the interior of the brothers' villa with a splendid set of *trompe l'oeil* murals (see figs. 19.49–19.50).

Palladio's few churches are milestones in architectural history. His grandest interior is that of San Giorgio Maggiore (figs. 19.66–19.68, 19.47). The design is Albertian in the sense that it is conceived in terms of a single giant order flanking arches supported by a smaller order, but unlike Alberti's Sant'Andrea in Mantua (see figs. 10.7–10.9), San Giorgio Maggiore retains the traditional side aisles of a basilica. The giant order consists of single engaged columns, which at the corners of the crossing are paired with giant pilasters. The inner order consists of smaller pilasters, coupled in depth like the paired columns of Sansovino's Library of San Marco. The sculptural effect of the interior is based on these combinations of flat and rounded forms, and decoration is almost totally eliminated. The convex frieze is devoid of ornament, the columns and pilasters unfluted, and even the leaves of the capitals simplified.

San Giorgio Maggiore was commenced in 1566. Palladio did not live to see the façade completed, but his design, which was followed by Vincenzo Scamozzi (fig. 19.68), provided a new solution to the dilemma of how to devise a classical façade for the difficult shape of a Christian basilica, accommodating the difference in height between the side aisles and the elevated nave. At Santa Maria Novella (see fig. 10.6), Alberti had bridged the gap by means of giant consoles. At Sant'Andrea in Mantua (see



19.66. PALLADIO. Interior, S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice. Begun 1566.
Commissioned by the monastery's abbot, Andrea Pampuro da Asolo.
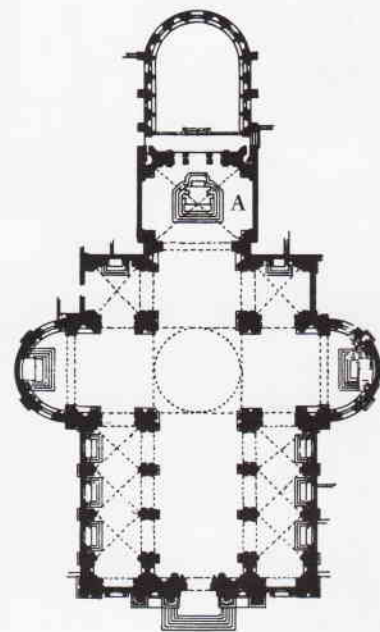


19.67. Plan of fig. 19.66.
A. Location of fig. 19.46.

fig. 10.7)—not actually a basilica—he had applied a triumphal arch motif. Palladio amplified Alberti's interpenetrating orders on the Sant'Andrea façade into two intersecting temples, one low and broad to accommodate the side-aisle roofs, the other tall and slender to embrace the lofty nave, the former articulated by pilasters, the latter by engaged columns. It was an ingenious, harmonious, and definitive solution.

Palladio did not live to see many of his designs completed. His Olympian Theater at Vicenza (figs. 19.69–19.71)—



19.68. PALLADIO. Façade of S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice. Completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi in 1610.



19.69. PALLADIO. Interior, Olympian Theater, Vicenza. 1580–84. The seating area and the proscenium were designed by Palladio; Vincenzo Scamozzi designed the permanent stage setting. Commissioned by the Accademia Olimpica, of which Palladio was a member.

Palladio's theater was in part inspired by the ruins of the ancient Roman theater in Vicenza and other Roman theaters he had visited, as well as by his study of Vitruvius' comments on ancient theaters. The inauguration of the theater, in 1585, featured a performance of *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles, translated into Italian and complete with music composed for the chorus by the organist of San Marco in Venice. A letter written by Filippo Pigafetta after attending the opening production described the theater in detail, concluding that every part "seems worked by the hand of Mercury and decorated by the Graces themselves."

one of several Cinquecento attempts to re-create, usually in temporary materials such as wood and stucco, the shape and appearance of an ancient Roman theater. The building, intended for the production of contemporary and classical drama, is typical of the classicizing ideals of the elite society for whom Palladio built. The stage is provided with fixed scenery based on the ancient Roman *scenae frons* designed by Scamozzi. But Scamozzi's arrangement of columns, statues, tabernacles, and reliefs follows no exact ancient model. The three central openings lead into radiating streets that seemingly terminate at a vast distance from the stage—an illusion created by a rising pavement and the rapidly diminishing height of the buildings that line these avenues. These streets, in fact only a few feet deep, rise up as the rooftops descend; despite the magic of the illusion, figures cannot penetrate deep into these spaces.
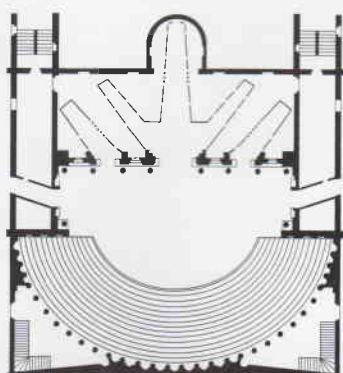


*Left:* 19.70. Plan of fig. 19.69.



19.71. VINCENZO SCAMOZZI. Permanent stage setting, Olympian Theater, Vicenza.

*Right:* 19.72. ALESSANDRO VITTORIA. *St. Jerome.* 1576(?). Marble, height 5'6½" (1.7 m). SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice. Commissioned for the Scuola di S. Fantin, Venice.

## Alessandro Vittoria

With its predominantly pictorial interests, Venice does not seem to have encouraged sculptors. Almost every important Italian Renaissance sculptor working in Venice in the sixteenth century came from Tuscany, and all but two were Florentines. Nonetheless, sculpture was needed in Venice, as elsewhere, for tombs, altars, and exterior decoration.

The sculptor Alessandro Vittoria (1525–1608), who came from Trento, in the Adige Valley north of the plain of the Po, was clearly influenced by the innovators in painting. His *St. Jerome* (fig. 19.72) demonstrates that he studied the lessons of anatomy so important for Michelangelo and central Italian artists, but his representation is also caught up in the current of Counter-Reformation religiosity seen in the late works of Titian and Tintoretto. The penitent saint is represented as if withdrawn from the world in a state of self-lacerating ecstasy. His lion is reduced to a symbol and the sculptor concentrated on the swollen veins in arms and hands, and, above all, on the look of terror at the emptiness within. The complex pose of the almost nude *figura serpentinata* reveals the impact of Michelangelo on the Venetian artist. The widespread influence of the works of Michelangelo for artists across the Italian peninsula will be even more evident in the works discussed in Chapter 20.

# THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

A final paradox in Italian Renaissance art is the coexistence of the energy, tension, and emotional power of Michelangelo's late style and the elegance and refinement of the style that flourished at the Medici court in Florence in the second half of the Cinquecento under Duke Cosimo I, who was installed as second duke of Florence in 1537 and who in 1569 became grand duke of Tuscany. The artificiality and elaboration of this court style became institutionalized in 1563 with the founding, under the sponsorship of Duke Cosimo, of the Florentine Academy, which soon played a significant role in controlling production and dictating artistic style. Duke Cosimo's court artists were required to glorify dynastic rule, court society, and a prescribed version of religion. The formal complexities of their art matched the allegorical conceits so frequently found in their subject matter (see fig. 20.33). Toward the end of the century, artists in Florence and elsewhere began to move toward naturalism, signaling some of the changes that led into the Baroque style of the seventeenth century (see figs. 20.46, 20.58).

## Michelangelo after 1534

Although Michelangelo had been one of the founders of the High Renaissance style, this had not prevented him from devising inventions of a strikingly different sort in Florence between 1516 and 1534 (see pp. 544–54). Michelangelo never relaxed his republican principles, although briefly, toward the end of his life, he entertained the possibility of returning to Florence to work at the duke's court. Generally avoiding dynastic patrons except when they promised the liberation of Florence, he worked for the Church—at times without pay—and for himself.

The central monument of mid-Cinquecento painting in Rome is Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* (fig. 20.1). Early in 1534, Pope Clement VII discussed with Michelangelo a new fresco for the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel; the subject they considered has been tentatively identified as the Resurrection. But Clement died that year, and the new pope, Paul III, commissioned Michelangelo to paint the Last Judgment. This penitential subject must have seemed more appropriate at a time when Rome was still reeling from the Sack of 1527 and the papacy was under attack from the Protestants in the north. At the same time, critics in the Italian cities were demanding greater fiscal responsibility and moral behavior from those in power. Images of justice and punishment, sacred and secular, had already appeared on a grand scale in Italy (see figs. 18.31, 18.33–18.34, 18.65), but the dedication of the altar wall in the pope's private chapel to this theme indicates a new sobriety and intensity.

Michelangelo's panoramic vision of the subject meant that the two windows on the altar wall had to be closed

*Opposite:* 20.1. MICHELANGELO. *Last Judgment.* 1536–41. Fresco, 48 × 44' (encompassing approx. 2,100 square feet or 190 square meters of surface). Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Paul III Farnese.
The *giornata* patches reveal that Michelangelo spent 449 days painting the fresco. At one point Michelangelo fell from the scaffolding, injuring his leg. Some of the draperies painted in tempera over Michelangelo's nude figures after his death were removed during restoration, but some were retained, especially in cases where Michelangelo's original plaster layer had been removed. The rectangular black patches (such as the one in the upper-right corner) indicate the condition of the fresco before restoration.

and Perugino's frescoed altarpiece of the *Assumption of the Virgin* and his *Nativity* and *Finding of Moses*, both part of the fifteenth-century narrative program (see fig. 14.18), had to be destroyed. With them went four figures of popes and Michelangelo's lunettes representing the first seven generations of the ancestry of Christ. Medieval Last Judgments were usually hierarchical, compartmentalized compositions in which all figures, including sometimes even the resurrected dead, were dressed according to their social position, and Christ, the Virgin, and the apostles were enthroned in heaven. Instead, Michelangelo conceived a grand unified scene without any break and without thrones, insignias of rank, or, even, clothes. In a huge clockwise motion, figures rise from their graves, gather round the central figure of Christ, and sink downward toward hell. The entire wall seems to dissolve as we witness the dramatic events of judgment and punishment.

Michelangelo seems to have based his interpretation on the vision of the Second Coming in Matthew 24:30–31: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." The brilliant blue sky should be interpreted as the fulfillment of Christ's words a few verses later: "Heaven and earth shall pass away." Only enough earth is shown to provide graves from which the dead can crawl. Some corpses are well preserved, some are skeletons, in conformity with the tradition already seen in Signorelli's Orvieto frescoes (see fig. 14.37). The dead show no joy in their resurrection, only dread of the judgment taking place around them. Some are dazed, others hopeless; a few look upward in awe. In opposition to those soaring upward, others are fought over by angels who want to lift them and demons intent on dragging them down (fig. 20.2).

The nudity of most of the figures—so shocking to the prudery of the Counter-Reformation that Michelangelo's pupil Daniele da Volterra was commissioned in 1565 to paint drapery over offending details—is in harmony with Michelangelo's lifelong concern with the human figure. Both the dead rising from their graves and the elect in heaven are shown naked before Christ; for Michelangelo, capturing the meaning of the theme was more important than decorum. To help unify the scene, Michelangelo increased the scale of the figures in the upper part of the fresco, and all the figures are broader than those of the Sistine Ceiling—the proportions heavier, the heads smaller, and the modeling more vigorous. Michelangelo generally omitted wings and haloes, perhaps because they seemed



20.2. MICHELANGELO. Damned Soul Descending to Hell, detail of fig. 20.1.

hindrances to the expression of bodily perfection as he understood it. Only their greater power and often startling beauty distinguish the angels from ordinary mortals. The dominant color is that of human flesh against a vivid blue sky with a few touches of brilliant drapery that echo the rich hues of the ceiling. The dead rising from their graves still preserve the colors of the earth—dun, ocher, drab.

Christ is placed in the area best lit by the windows on either side, and is even larger than the gigantic apostles who surround him. Although his attention seems to be occupied with the gesture of damnation—his right hand held high as he turns to his left—his left hand is extended gently, as if summoning the blessed up toward him. Instead of the traditional mandorla, a subtle radiance extends around him. This beardless, almost nude Christ is a summation of Michelangelo's new, more massive canon of proportion.

The apostle Bartholomew, who was flayed alive, holds up his own skin. It has been suggested that the face on this skin is an anguished self-portrait of Michelangelo (fig. 20.3). Like his letters and poems, this self-expression

20.3. MICHELANGELO. St. Bartholomew holding his flayed skin, which may bear the features of Michelangelo, detail of fig. 20.1.

exposes the artist's feelings of guilt and inadequacy:

I live for sin, dying to myself I live;
It is no longer my life, but that of sin:
My good by Heaven, my evil by myself was given me,
By my free will, of which I am deprived.

As the damned descend to their fate, a few struggle against the angels who drive them from heaven; most, however, seem resigned to the force of divine will. As a child, Michelangelo must have contemplated the torments of hell as depicted in a number of colossal works in Florence, including the *Last Judgment* in the Baptistery (see fig. 2.9). He read Dante's *Inferno* and he most likely knew Giotto's *Last Judgment* in Padua (see fig. 3.1). But in the final analysis, it is surprising how little these works seem to have influenced him. His version moves beyond physical torment or, indeed, physical experience of any sort. Charon drives the damned from his boat into hell with an oar, as Dante says he should, but the oar never touches a body. The torments shown are spiritual, although grimacing devils stare from the darkness of a hell mouth that opens directly above the altar (fig. 20.4), warning the celebrant at Mass, often the pope himself, that he is in the same mortal danger as all humanity.

The cleaning and restoration of the fresco between 1990 and 1994 revealed the unifying role of the blue sky; the pigment used is ground lapis lazuli, which in the Renaissance was called ultramarine. It was expensive, but only



20.4. MICHELANGELO. Demons in Hell, detail of fig. 20.1. Restoration in the 1990s revealed that, while the basic medium is fresco, oil was used in areas of the lower part of the painting where Michelangelo wanted metallic green and blue tones that could not be accomplished in fresco.

**20.5. MICHELANGELO.**
*Crucifixion of St. Peter.* 1545–50.
Fresco, 20'4" × 22' (6.2 × 6.7 m).
Pauline Chapel, Vatican, Rome.
Commissioned by Pope Paul III
Farnese.
Technical examination of Michelan-
gelo's two large Pauline Chapel
frescoes during the current restoration
campaign has revealed that each
is composed of approximately
85–90 *giornate.*

ultramarine could create this vivid effect. Documents reveal that the pigment was apparently unavailable in Rome and had to be purchased in Venice and Ferrara. The differences between the outlines scratched freehand or from cartoons into the plaster surface for some of the figures and their subsequent painted forms reveal that Michelangelo frequently changed his mind about details.

The figure in the lower right-hand corner with a serpent wound around his body is supposedly a portrait of Biagio da Cesena, a papal official who criticized the nudity of Michelangelo's figures after he had seen earlier portions of the composition, stating that "such pictures were better suited to a bathroom, or a roadside wine shop, than to a chapel of a pope." When Biagio complained to Pope Paul III that Michelangelo had painted him in hell, the pontiff replied that his authority, while encompassing heaven and earth, did not extend into hell.

In 1542, still hounded by the heirs of Julius II to finish the late pope's tomb—the final, reduced version was not dedicated until 1545—the sixty-seven-year-old artist climbed yet another scaffold to paint a chapel constructed for Pope Paul III just outside the entrance to the Sistine Chapel. Interrupted by illness and other commissions, he worked spasmodically on flanking frescoes of the *Cruci-*

*fixion of St. Peter* and the *Conversion of St. Paul* (figs. 20.5–20.6). The Pauline Chapel was not completed until the spring of 1550, several months after the pope's death.

Against barren landscapes, the two scenes are staged with cataclysmic violence. Saul, on the road to Damascus —visible in the right background—to persecute Christians, is struck down by a heavenly apparition and falls from his terrified horse: "And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:3–4). The vision is here fully corporeal. A foreshortened Christ appears in the sky among angelic platoons whose figures have been compressed into blocks, their curves flattened into planes. As Christ moves down-ward and outward, the foreshortened horse leaps upward and inward, splitting Saul's attendants into blocks of figures. The dramatic figure of the blinded Saul—shortly to become the apostle Paul—was clearly inspired by Raphael's blinded Heliodorus (see fig. 17.52). He falls forward as if struck by a force emanating from the floating Christ, and his face reflects both the blindness of Homer in ancient busts of the poet and the agony of the ancient *Laocoön* group (see fig. 17.3). Unexpectedly old (St. Paul was a young man at the time of his conversion), the face
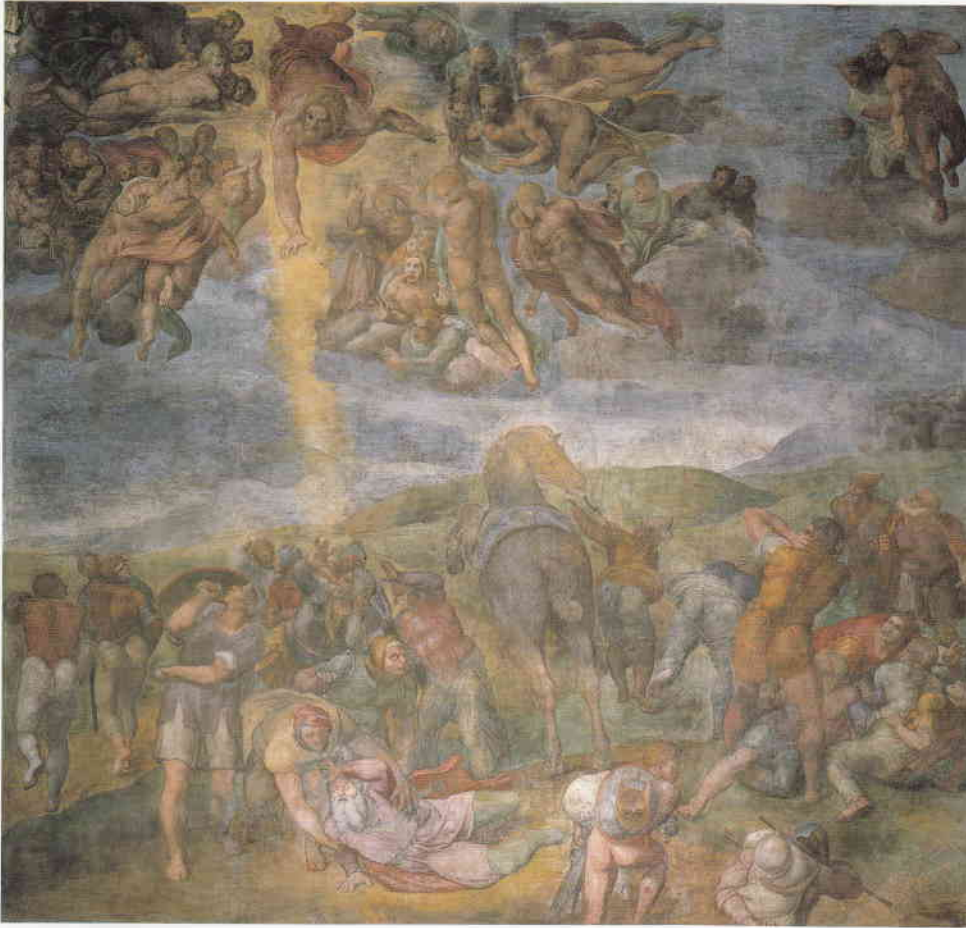
20.6. MICHELANGELO.
*Conversion of St. Paul.* 1542–45.
Fresco, 20'4" × 22' (6.2 × 6.7 m).
Pauline Chapel, Vatican, Rome.
Commissioned by Pope Paul III
Farnese.

Cleaning has revealed the same
unexpected color juxtapositions seen
in the Sistine Chapel ceiling frescoes;
Saul's purple garment and green tights,
for example, are set off by his red
cloak. Passages of the sky, the
landscape, and the Damascus
cityscape in the upper right were
rapidly brushed onto the plaster
surface, in contrast to the precision
with which the figures were executed.

with its snowy, two-tailed beard was probably intended to suggest that of the patron (see Titian's portrait, fig. 19.21).

The *Crucifixion of St. Peter* shows the elevation of Peter's cross, which forms a powerful diagonal across the composition. Some of the foreground figures are cut off at the waist or knee by the frame. Renaissance perspective is abandoned and what should logically be behind is represented as above. The strange composition, with its figures floating upward, culminates in an awestruck group silhouetted against distant promontories. They look down or at each other with expressions of trancelike wonder that are shared by the soldiers and executioners. Few figures are shown in action, and *contrapposto* has disappeared almost entirely, as have hatred, anger, and all emotions except for awe and fear. Michelangelo's figures express the trauma experienced by those who are witnessing these events.

When he finished the frescoes, Michelangelo was seventy-five. His general ill health prevented him from undertaking monumental pictorial commissions, but he could still carve stone and design buildings. At this time, his architectural forms became grander and more richly articulated, as if his sense of mass, which in his earlier art had arisen from the human figure, could function on its own in the abstract shapes of architecture. While continu-

ing his long-distance supervision of the details of the Laurentian Library (see figs. 18.11–18.12), he undertook projects begun by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger at the Palazzo Farnese and St. Peter's (see pp. 584–86).

We have seen the effect that Michelangelo's central window and colossal cornice had on Antonio's façade at the Palazzo Farnese (see fig. 18.57). In Antonio's courtyard Michelangelo intervened with revolutionary results (fig. 20.7). Antonio's first story had been completed and Michelangelo carried out Antonio's second, Ionic story with only minor changes. But in the third story he abandoned engaged columns, substituting pilasters on lofty bases. Each pilaster is flanked by half-pilasters, and these pilasters—the architectural counterpart of the clustered, vibrating figures of Michelangelo's pictorial and sculptural compositions—introduce a new organic richness to the static architectural elements designed by Antonio. This new vitality was admired by seventeenth-century architects, and in a sense Michelangelo was helping to sow the seeds of Baroque architecture. He achieved the same quality of tension and inner life in his windows for the third story, which have broken sills with pendant moldings at the corners, fantastic consoles, lions' heads, and broken moldings inside arched pediments.

20.7. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE YOUNGER and MICHELANGELO. Courtyard, Palazzo Farnese, Rome. 1517–46 and 1547–50. Commissioned by Alessandro Farnese, who later became Pope Paul III Farnese (see also figs. 18.57–18.59).

These bold, dramatic effects can be related to those Michelangelo obtained in his articulation of the exterior of St. Peter's when he took charge of the project in 1547. Antonio the Younger had continued the construction of Bramante's design; the piers and arches to support the dome had been built and could not be changed in any essential respect. A fresco by Vasari (see fig. 20.40) shows the state of affairs in 1544: Bramante's coupled pilasters are already built and the barrel vaults of the transept still have their wooden centering; Bramante's temporary Doric construction around the apse appears at the left, and at the right a portion of the nave of the old Constantinian basilica of St. Peter still stands. In the center, masons are laying the stones of a feature Michelangelo particularly disliked: a huge ambulatory added by Antonio that can be seen on the plan being presented to the pope. These galleries and loggie would have inflated the church to almost double its already gigantic size. As Antonio's model (fig. 20.8) shows, the ambulatory would have supported a mezzanine and Ionic second story of largely open arches with no obvious purpose. An open gallery would have connected the main building to an almost independent façade culminating in two *campanili* as lofty as the dome.

Admittedly, Antonio's design is fantastic. At no point can the eye select a single dominant feature. Even the dome has superimposed peristyles, and the ribbed shell (instead of Bramante's hemisphere; see fig. 17.11) is crushed between the peristyles and the outsize lantern. Bramante's corner towers are converted into strange octagonal structures lit by oculi and bristling with obelisks.

Michelangelo wrote a devastating letter criticizing the design as "Germanic." He pointed out that the loggie would provide shelter for all kinds of crime, that it would take an army of guards to clear them at nightfall, and that in order to construct the ambulatories, whole sections of the Vatican, including the Sistine and Pauline



20.8. ANTONIO DA SANGALLO THE YOUNGER. Model for St. Peter's on a scale 1:30, Vatican, Rome. 1539–46. Wood, originally painted. Fabbrica di S. Pietro, Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Paul III Farnese.

This is the largest extant model produced in the Renaissance in Italy. It was constructed by Antonio Labacco and cost between 5,000 and 6,000 scudi.
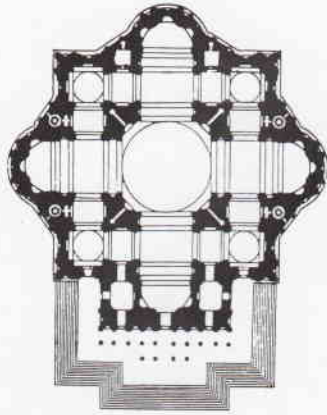
20.9. MICHELANGELO. Plan of St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome. 1546–64. Michelangelo's work on St. Peter's was commissioned by Pope Paul III Farnese. For Bramante's original plan for St. Peter's, see figs. 17.11–17.13. For a view of the interior as completed, see fig. 17.15.

chapels, would have to be demolished. Whoever departed from Bramante, Michelangelo said, "departed from the truth." He then accepted the commission to complete St. Peter's not for pay but, as he said, for the salvation of his soul. Michelangelo's new, compact plan revitalized the project. He eliminated the ambulatories and the façade with its towers. He reinstated the Greek-cross plan of Bramante (fig. 20.9; see also fig. 17.12), albeit with only one entrance, and the unifying colossal order on the exterior. In the interests of the stability of the dome, however, Michelangelo also suppressed Bramante's smaller Greek crosses, substituting simpler domed spaces (two exterior domes, built later, probably reflect Michelangelo's designs) and increasing the bulk of the piers. Michelangelo's façade was to have been a temple shape of free-standing columns like that of the Pantheon, but in this case subordinate to the crowning effect of the elevated dome.

In order to unify the exterior (fig. 20.10), Michelangelo used the Corinthian order as an embracing theme, with



20.10. MICHELANGELO. St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome. View of back. 1546–64.

paired Corinthian pilasters below and paired Corinthian columns in the peristyle and lantern. He designed a Florentine ribbed dome instead of Bramante's hemisphere (see fig. 17.14), dividing it not by eight ribs as at the Florentine Duomo, but by sixteen ribs, and even these are paired (fig. 20.11). Thus the entire structure, from the ground to the sphere on the lantern, gives the impression of a colossal monolith. To increase the effect of unity and density, Michelangelo cut across the re-entrant angles of the transept with diagonal masses. At his death the drum and peristyle of the dome were still under construction. The



20.11. MICHELANGELO, GIACOMO DELLA PORTA, LUIGI VANVITELLI. Model for half of the dome of St. Peter's, Vatican, Rome. 1558–61 with modifications in the late sixteenth century by della Porta and the mid-eighteenth century by Vanvitelli. Limewood, painted, height approximately 16'5" (5 m). Fabbrica di S. Pietro, Vatican, Rome. Commissioned by Pope Paul III Farnese. In Michelangelo's original model the dome was more hemispherical. Della Porta transformed the dome in both model and basilica by making it more vertical. Vanvitelli's changes were made when the model was studied because of cracks developing in the dome proper; he added the known cracks to the model and also incorporated his ideas for strengthening the dome. The model thus reflects the appearance of the dome today, not Michelangelo's original plan.

final dome was heightened somewhat from Michelangelo's original design, which was closer to a hemisphere, but by and large the effect of the building when seen from the sides or back follows his intentions.

The unity Michelangelo had created overwhelms the details, and the warfare between wall and column that had reached a deadlock in his Medici Chapel and Laurentian Library is here resolved; the column has at last won. While the basic forms and spaces of the interior were decided by Bramante, the plastic, sculptural effect of the interior details are clearly the work of Michelangelo. They have, however, been transformed by the seventeenth-century addition of inlaid designs in colored marble and gold mosaic (see fig. 17.15).

In summarizing Michelangelo's contributions to St. Peter's, it is important to emphasize that he continued the centralized plan devised by Bramante that made the dome over the tomb of St. Peter the central feature of both exterior and interior—an effect destroyed in both cases by the nave added in the seventeenth century. While Bramante had planned a lower dome based on that of the Pantheon, Michelangelo chose a more vertical profile. Michelangelo was also responsible for the details of the pilasters that unify interior and exterior. The profiles of their bases and their leafy capitals are both simple and extremely beautiful. That the structure was designed by a sculptor is evident in the vigorous forms of the exterior as seen from the back: as the wall changes direction to define the apses that surround the dome, the transitions create an effect of dynamic movement on a monumental scale.

Michelangelo's single but influential contribution to civic design was his scheme to unify and decorate the Capitoline Hill, a site that had symbolic value as the religious and political center of ancient Rome (figs. 20.12–20.13). Against his will, in 1538 he moved the Roman bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (see fig. 1.4), then considered to be a portrait of Constantine, to the central position in this piazza. He provided the statue with an ovoid base and designed a double flight of steps for the main entrance of the Palazzo Senatorio at the back of the piazza. Michelangelo probably made no further designs before 1561, when work on a broader Capitoline project began. Certainly he was responsible for the general idea of the later project, which unifies the space with two facing palaces, the Palazzo dei Conservatori and Palazzo Nuovo (fig. 20.14). They are placed at a somewhat awkward angle to each other because of the terrain and the need to incorporate pre-existing structures, but Michelangelo's design for the pavement of the piazza uses a radiating pattern that disguises the relationship, and as a result most visitors presume that the buildings are parallel to each other. This is one of the
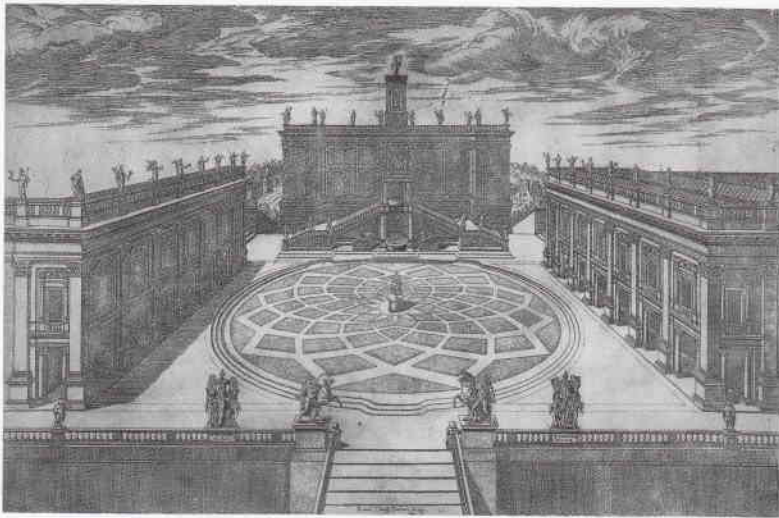
20.12. MICHELANGELO. Campidoglio, Rome. 1538–64. Engraving by Étienne Dupérac, 1569.
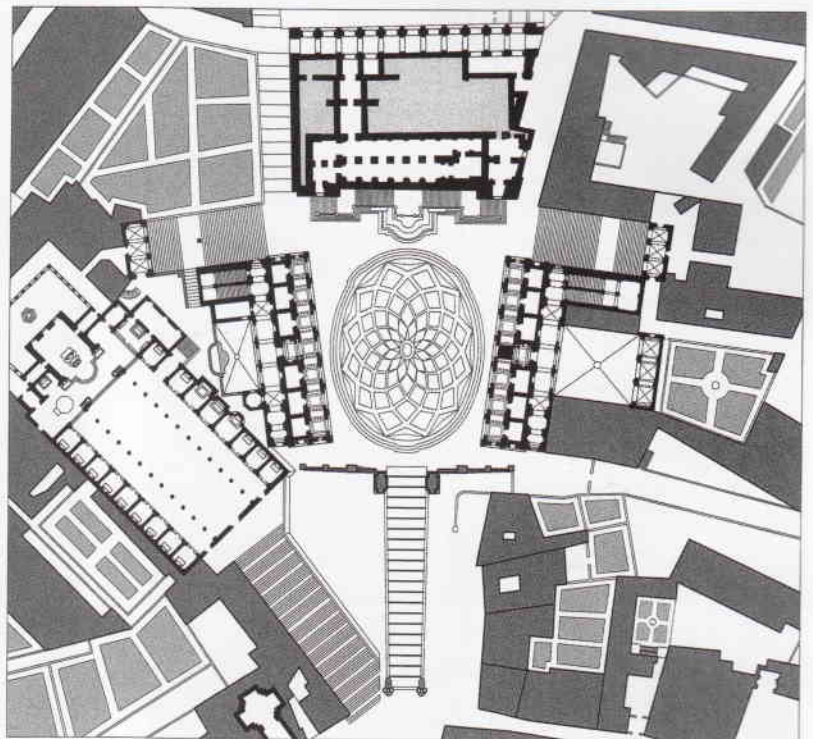


20.13. Plan of Campidoglio area today, Rome.

great examples of the imposition of Renaissance order. The façades of the palazzi are, like St. Peter's, unified by a colossal Corinthian order with the same beautiful capitals the artist had designed for the basilica. The Corinthian order is contrasted with the smaller Ionic order that frames the openings on the lower level. The use of a straight entablature for the portico, rather than the by now traditional arched arcade (see fig. 6.13), is a typical Michelangelism. The balustrades and other decoration along the roofline further emphasize the horizontality of the facing palazzi.

In the artist's last writings, death seemed always to be near. But he was no longer dreaming of the mighty Creator, nor even of the awesome Judge, but rather of the merciful Redeemer. His drawings of Christ are dedicated to:

That Love divine
Which opened to embrace us
His arms upon the Cross.

Sometimes the figures of Mary and John the Evangelist seem unable to bridge the gap that separates them from

20.14. MICHELANGELO. Palazzo dei Conservatori, Campidoglio, Rome. Begun 1563. The matching Palazzo Nuovo was not completed until the seventeenth century. Michelangelo's design for the pavement was not executed until the Fascist era.

God, and they cry soundlessly in the void below the cross; sometimes (fig. 20.15) the same shudder that pierces the crucified Christ unites them with him as they embrace him, pressing themselves against him, trying to merge their being in his. Michelangelo's eyesight was no longer clear, his hand shook, and the contours tremble, but vague though the shapes are, their masses are almost architectural, and the misty figures are grouped into compositions of a grand simplicity.

Two unfinished *Pietà*s survive as sculptural witnesses of Michelangelo's inner life in his last years. One, carved before 1555 (fig. 20.16), was meant for his own tomb. He had already removed the left leg, apparently to replace it, when, in a fit of desperation—he claimed the stone was too hard and would not obey him, but doubtless there were psychological reasons as well—he started to destroy the work. He apparently smashed the group in several places before his pupils stopped him. They pieced together the breaks, but the leg to be replaced was never completed. In spite of this gap, and the finishing of the Magdalen by a pupil so that she now seems out of proportion with the other figures, the effect of the group is immensely moving. Rather than the traditional emphasis on the mourning of the Virgin, the theme here becomes the power of death, which seems to be drawing Christ downward into the tomb with a force that the human figures are powerless to prevent. Sinking with him are the Magdalen, the Virgin, and a figure at the top who represents either Nicodemus, who was present at the Crucifixion, or Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man who allowed Christ to be buried in his tomb. The features of this figure are Michelangelo's own. The difference between this gentle, meditative self-image and the agonized one on the empty skin in the *Last*
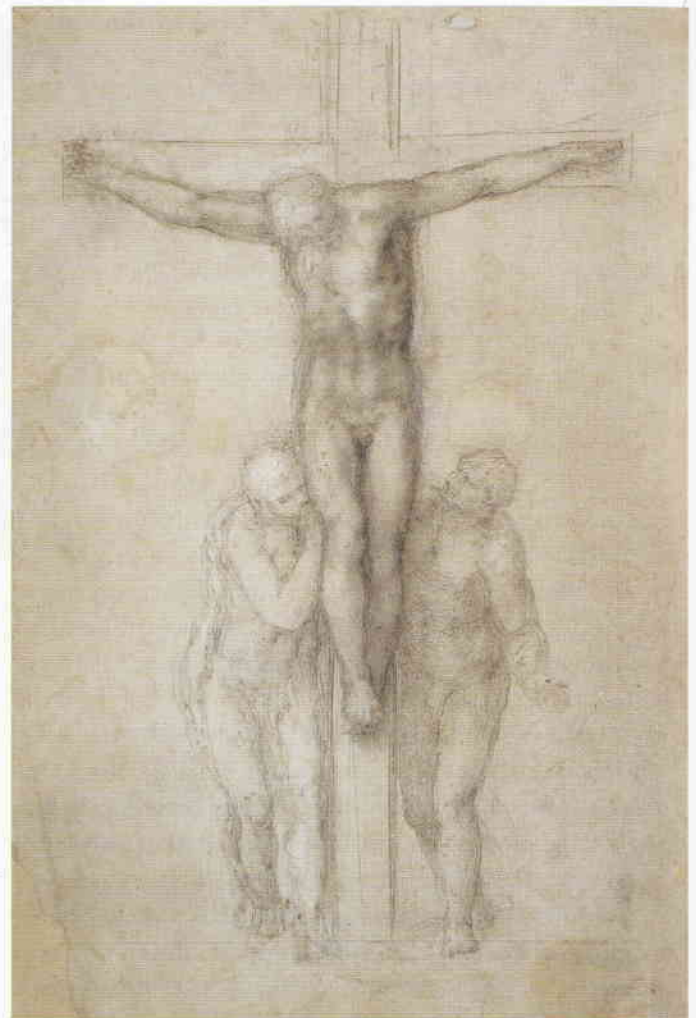


20.15. MICHELANGELO. *Crucifixion*. 1550–60(?). Black chalk, 16⅜ × 11" (42 × 28 cm). British Museum, London.

20.16. MICHELANGELO. *Pietà*, c. 1547–55. Marble, height 7'8"
(2.33 m). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence.

are sinking into the grave, but that the Virgin is standing
at its brink and that Christ floats almost weightlessly in
her arms.

Six days before his death, aged nearly eighty-nine,
Michelangelo was still working on the group. He fell ill
after exposure to the rain, and at first refused his
pupils' counsel to go to bed. He eventually succumbed,
probably to pneumonia. In his will he consigned his soul to
God, his body to the earth, and his belongings to his
nearest relatives, and asked his friends to remember in his
death the death of Christ.
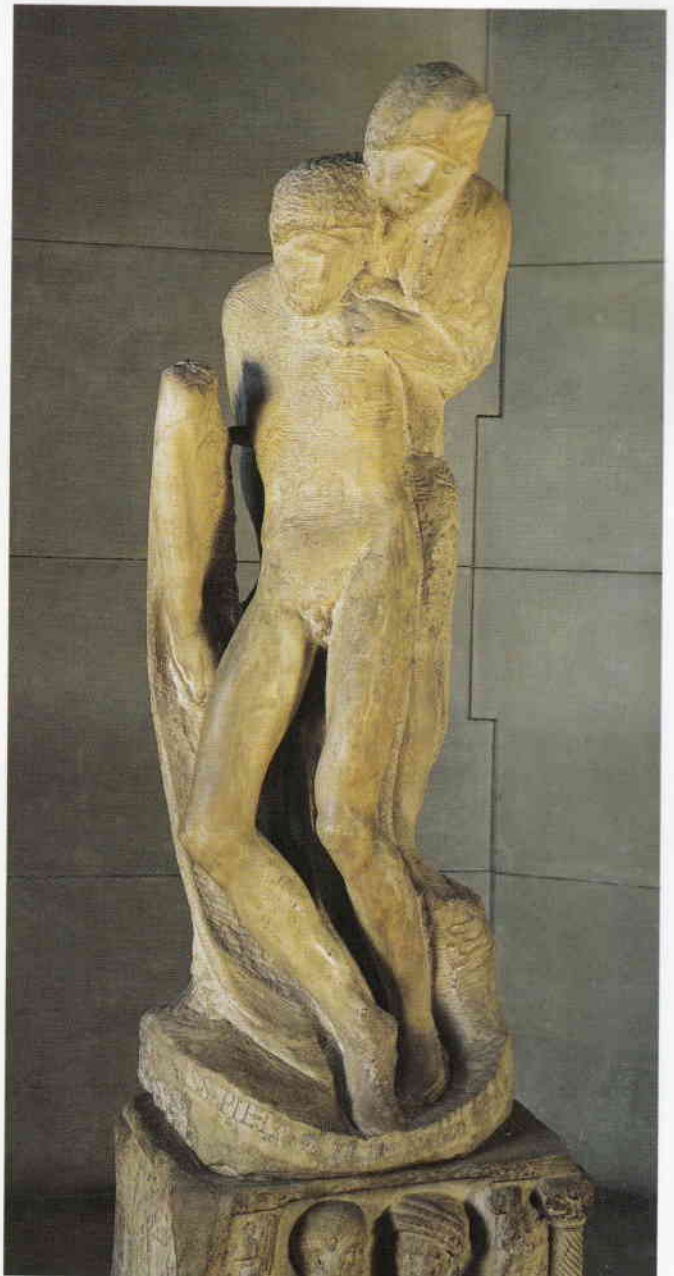


20.17. MICHELANGELO. *Pietà*. 1554–64. Marble, height 5'3⅜"
(1.6 m). Castello Sforzesco, Milan. Intended by Michelangelo for his
own tomb.

*Judgment* (see fig. 20.3) gives an insight into the final
period of Michelangelo's life and art. Rough though the
unfinished surfaces of this *Pietà* may be, the emotional and
spiritual relationships and the power of the forms and
composition need no analysis.

Shortly before his death in February 1564, Michelangelo
began to work again on a *Pietà* that he had started ten
years or so earlier (fig. 20.17). It went through at least two
main stages. The original version consisted of the Virgin
holding the slender, dead Christ in her arms. But in a last
feverish burst of activity, Michelangelo cut away the head
and shoulders of Christ, leaving the right arm still hanging,
and began to fashion a new head out of the Virgin's
shoulder and chest. Then he cut into the new heads, drawing
them even closer together. One has the feeling not that they

# Art at the Medici Court

No such personalized and moving disclosures are evident in the works of the artists working at the Medici court, who believed that they stood, with Michelangelo, at the highest point that art had achieved since antiquity. Vasari wrote that he and his contemporaries had discovered the perfect formulas for representing graceful figures and features and creating beautiful compositions. Not surprisingly, such formulas sometimes give their works a certain similarity in composition and figure type. To Vasari, this was an advantage because it sped up production—an important consideration for a popular artist with many patrons interested in large-scale commissions.

One's estimate of the work of the artists at the Florentine court is a matter of personal taste and judgment, but it is clear that by the middle of the Cinquecento in central Italy, the Renaissance, in its etymological sense of "rebirth," was over. Michelangelesque, Raphaelesque, and even Leonardesque forms lingered on and whole motifs are sometimes borrowed, but it seems that artists no longer experienced the excitement of discovery. Nature—the ultimate reference point for Masaccio, Leonardo, and other earlier artists—takes second place to refined inventions and elegant patterns of representation. This style is sometimes identified as the *maniera*—a term avoided here because of the ongoing debate about its meaning and extent.

Michelangelo is known to have planned a number of sculptural reliefs for inclusion in the tomb of Julius II and other projects, but scholars are uncertain about what their style might have been because so few finished relief sculptures by Michelangelo are known. Would the marble panels for Julius's tomb have been in low or high relief? What might the bronze reliefs have looked like? What role might reliefs from antiquity on prominent display in Roman private collections have played in his ideas?

The extent of the ancient sculptural remains available to central Italian artists is revealed in a view of the courtyard of the palace of Cardinal Andrea della Valle in the 1530s (fig. 20.18). Almost every available space is filled with figures and reliefs, many of them fragmentary. We can only imagine how artists of the period must have pored over these works and those displayed in the Belvedere Palace (see figs. 1.5, 17.3–17.4); the evidence of the impact of such collections is preserved in the works that Renaissance artists created under their inspiration.

A large, exquisitely carved, low-relief marble panel representing Cosimo I as Patron of Pisa (fig. 20.19) by Pierino da Vinci (probably 1521–1554) demonstrates the influence of both ancient reliefs and the style of Michelangelo, whom Pierino had met in Rome. The relief shows the duke elevating a figure representing Pisa. With a general's baton, Cosimo drives away Pisa's enemies, who are laden with plunder. Behind him reclines the bearded River Arno, doubtless derived from one of the river gods Michelangelo planned for the Medici Chapel or one of the ancient figures that had been Michelangelo's models. This figure is a reference to Cosimo's plans to deepen the Arno, rebuild the port of Pisa, and connect it with a canal to the new port at Livorno. Among the other allegorical figures, the University of Pisa, which Cosimo reorganized and re-established,



20.18. Ancient sculpture displayed in the 1530s in the courtyard of Cardinal Andrea della Valle (later known as Palazzo Valle-Capranica), Rome, as seen in an engraving made by Heeronymus Cock in 1553 after a lost drawing by M. van Heemskerck, who was in Rome between 1532 and 1536–37. The cardinal died in 1534. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

is shown holding a great book. The polished Michelangelesque figures in low and still lower relief are defined with linear perfection. In the left background a galley can be seen, and the sculpture would, if finished, doubtless have shown other vessels. The face of the figure in low relief on the far left who looks out at us is the artist's self-portrait. The fact that Pierino's large groups in the round are highly dependent on Michelangelo's *Victory* for Julius's tomb (see fig. 18.15) supports the suggestion that Michelangelo's marble reliefs might have looked like this.

A possibility for reliefs in bronze is suggested by the work of another Michelangelo imitator, Vincenzo Danti (1530–1576), who also produced groups inspired by the *Victory*. His *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* (fig. 20.20) suggests the hazy, sketchy style of Michelangelo's composition drawings translated into bronze. The relief offers a wide variety of projections and a free handling of detail so that, as light moves over the bronze, there is a similar effect to the *chiaroscuro* and floating contours of rapid drawing in charcoal or chalk (see fig. 18.8). The composition is based on Michelangelo's spandrel for the Sistine Ceiling (see fig. 17.39), but there Moses is relegated to the background. Danti, instead, has centered him and surrounded him with the writhing figures of the children of Israel, the men mostly nude, their poses borrowed from the *Last Judgment* to display Danti's knowledge of the works of Michelangelo. The effect of distance is achieved by Danti's spontaneity in modeling the wax from which a mold was made for the bronze cast. The suggestiveness and accidental effects of the model are preserved even in the figures and drapery. As a result, Danti suggests less a historical event than a vision of sudden healing and salvation.



*Right:* 20.19. PIERINO DA VINCI. *Cosimo I as Patron of Pisa.* 1549. Marble, 29⅛ × 42" (74 × 108 cm). Museo Vaticano, Rome. Probably commissioned by Luca Martini, the Head of Cosimo's Office of Canals in Pisa.



20.20. VINCENZO DANTI. *Moses and the Brazen Serpent.* 1559. Bronze, 32⅜ × 67¾" (82 × 172 cm). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Commissioned by Duke Cosimo de Medici.

# Benvenuto Cellini

Among the sculptors who found work in Florence under the Medici rulers of the middle and later Cinquecento, the most familiar figure is Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571), partly because his vivid but unfinished autobiography is still widely read. Cellini called his autobiography his *Vita*, following Vasari's model, having begun it in 1558, when Vasari was revising and expanding his own *Vite*. It is significant that the first autobiography of modern times was written by an artist. The self-interest we have seen in works by earlier artists reaches a culmination in this literary work, which seems intended to promote Cellini's reputation with his contemporaries and guarantee his posterity. After many years of activity as a goldsmith in Rome, including hair-raising adventures during the Sack of 1527,

Cellini worked for a number of years in France in the service of King Francis I. The king paid Cellini an annual salary of 700 scudi (the same he had paid Leonardo da Vinci), plus additional payments for each work produced for the king. When Cellini later settled in Florence, he attracted the attention of Duke Cosimo I.

Cellini's gold and enamel container for salt and pepper is the most famous example of Renaissance goldsmithery (fig. 20.21). Although called a saltcellar, it was the rarity and expense of pepper that explains this luxurious example of tableware. Cellini tells us that he had five workmen (two Italian, two French, and one German) to help him with this and other artistic projects for King Francis. His detailed description of the saltcellar's subject matter reveals the layers of meaning that even a small object could express during the Renaissance:



20.21. BENVENUTO CELLINI. *Saltcellar of King Francis I of France.* 1540–43. Gold and enamel, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{8}$" (26.67 × 33.34 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Based on a model originally prepared for Cardinal Ippolito d'Este; commissioned by King Francis I. According to Cellini, the price was 1,000 scudi. In 1562 the saltcellar was almost melted down, but it escaped the fate that befell many examples of Renaissance goldsmithery, including works by Cellini known only through the descriptions in his autobiography. The saltcellar is the only major example of Cellini's goldsmith work to survive. It was stolen from the museum in 2003 but was recovered, undamaged, in 2006.

I represented the Sea and the Land, both seated, with their legs intertwined just as some branches of the sea run into the land and the land juts into the sea.... I had placed a trident in the right hand of the Sea.... The water is represented with its waves, and then it was beautifully enameled in its own color.... The Land I had represented by a very handsome woman ... entirely naked like her male partner. On a black ebony base ... I had set four gold figures ... representing Night, Day, Twilight, and Dawn. Besides these there were ... the four chief winds, partly enameled and finished off as exquisitely as can be imagined.

The figures of the Times of Day were inspired by Michelangelo's figures at the Medici Chapel at San Lorenzo (see figs. 18.5–18.6, 18.10). Salt was placed in a boat by the side of Sea, while pepper was served in a covered triumphal arch beside Land. Motifs that refer to the French king include the lilies on the cloth below Land, an elephant, and Francis I's personal emblem, a salamander. The intertwining of figures and forms is typical of the Florentine court style, as are the slender proportions of the female figure, the rich materials, and the virtuosity of detail and execution.

In his account of his presentation of the saltcellar to the king, Cellini places himself at the center of events:

When I set [the saltcellar] before the King he gasped in amazement and could not take his eyes off it. Then he instructed me to take it back to my house, and said that in due course he would let me know what I was to do with it. I took it home, and at once invited some of my close friends; and with them I dined very cheerfully, placing the saltcellar in the middle of the table. We were the first to make use of it.

In 1545 Duke Cosimo commissioned Cellini to make a large sculpture of Perseus decapitating the Gorgon Medusa, whose hair was composed of writhing snakes and whose glance could turn a person to stone (fig. 20.22). Owing to the difficulty of casting a group of this size in bronze, this project occupied him until 1554.

The destination of the work—the Loggia della Signoria (see fig. 2.41), where it would be paired with Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* (see fig. 12.7)—led Cellini to establish parallels between the triumphant figures, the defeated enemies, and even the cushions of their bases. (Iconographically justifiable for Judith, such a cushion is hard to understand for Perseus.) The modeling of the nude figure demonstrates Cellini's study of anatomy, while the play of light on the surfaces and the number of viewpoints needed to understand the composition (especially the twisted body of Medusa under Perseus' feet) are in the tradition of



20.22. BENVENUTO CELLINI. *Perseus and Medusa.* 1545–54. Bronze with marble pedestal, height 18' (5.5 m) with base. 🏛 Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence. Commissioned by Duke Cosimo de' Medici. Recently restored, the bronze statue has been returned to the Loggia dei Lanzi (originally called the Loggia della Signoria), but the marble base and its small bronze figures were replaced with copies and the originals are in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. (See also fig. 2.41.)

Michelangelo's marble nudes. In contrast to Donatello's work, there is no attempt to evoke horror at the decapitation; the perfection of workmanship, born of Cellini's training as a goldsmith, seems to pre-empt any possibility of drama. The rich locks of Perseus' hair, the writhing serpents, and even the blood gushing from the neck of Medusa are transformed into ornamental shapes similar to those that animate the extravagant decoration of the pedestal. Following Michelangelo's example in the *Pietà* in St. Peter's (see fig. 16.37), Cellini placed his signature on a strap crossing Perseus' breast.

In his autobiography Cellini explains the casting of the *Perseus and Medusa* in detail, describing a number of dramatic events, including a fire that set the workshop ablaze and a furnace explosion. At one point Cellini fell ill and went to bed, but when the hot bronze refused to melt properly he was awakened, and solved the problem by throwing the household's pewter plates and bowls into the reluctant metal. Cellini reports that Cosimo I had doubted his technical ability to complete this project. When it was finished, Cellini told Cosimo: "I think I am justified in saying that no other man on earth could have produced my Perseus."

In the same year that Cellini began the *Perseus*, he also began a bust of Cosimo I (fig. 20.23). In its pedestal base and curved lower outline, it follows the format of ancient busts rather than the truncated form used for such portraits in the Quattrocento (see fig. 10.28). Cosimo's armor, with a fierce lion's head decorating each shoulder, is based on antique models as well. Other differences from Quattrocento models are the prestigious medium of bronze and the new large scale: the duke is much larger than life. The matte surface finish of the armor contrasts with the smoother surfaces of cloth and flesh, while the stiffly held head, rigid neck, and imperious gaze endow the duke with an autocratic and even imperial presence. Similarly awe-inspiring is the technical subtlety of Cellini's casting and chasing of the bronze, just as we have seen with his *Salt-cellar* and *Perseus*. In the case of this bust, Cellini made a tactical error, for he represented Cosimo as nervous and rather belligerent, while Cosimo wanted to be thought of as a peacemaker. The duke chose not to display Cellini's bust in Florence, but had it placed over the entrance of the Medicean fort on the island of Elba, where it would have reinforced the notion of Medicean power and control over this distant outpost.



20.23. BENVENUTO CELLINI. *Portrait of Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici*. 1545–47. Bronze, originally gilded, height 3'7" (1.1 m). Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.
Cellini wrote that he made this bust for his own personal satisfaction, but the nature of his character as revealed in his autobiography suggests that it was surely made to draw Cosimo I's attention to his work.

## Bartolommeo Ammanati

Duke Cosimo commissioned a marble and bronze *Fountain of Neptune* (fig. 20.24) from Bartolommeo Ammanati (1511–1592) to celebrate his plans to promote the ports of Pisa and Livorno. Ammanati's colossal marble figure of Neptune surmounts four charging horses while the edge of the basin, itself a fantasy of elegant forms and motifs, is enlivened by figures of deities, fauns, and satyrs. A sea nymph (fig. 20.25) on the fountain, probably executed by an assistant using Ammanati's model, gives an insight into the relation of the Medici court artists to Michelangelo. The nymph is derived from the Medici Chapel *Dawn* (see fig. 18.10), but the differences are readily apparent: where Michelangelo is tense, Ammanati is relaxed; where Michelangelo is tragic, Ammanati is serene. Michelangelo's devices, including even the famous pose of the figure "slipping off" the support, have been ornamentalized. The motive is Michelangelesque, but the drama is gone. This is true of much of Ammanati's sculpture and, as we shall see, of paintings by Vasari and Alessandro Allori as well.



20.25. BARTOLOMMEO AMMANATI. Sea Nymph, detail of fig. 20.24. Bronze, over-life-sized.

The grandiosity of late Cinquecento architecture is well represented in the courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti (fig. 20.26), added by Ammanati to the Quattrocento structure (see fig. 10.12) after it was purchased in 1549 by Cosimo for his duchess, Eleonora da Toledo. When the Medici moved to the Palazzo Pitti in 1565, leaving behind their former living quarters in the Florentine republican city hall, the Palazzo dei Priori became known as their "old palace"—"Palazzo Vecchio"—a name still used today.

Ammanati had worked in Venice under Jacopo Sansovino, and he had the Zecca (see fig. 19.60) in mind when designing the Pitti courtyard. In the palace, however, the rustication embraces columns, walls, arches, and lintels. Only capitals, bases, entablatures, and ornamental window frames escape. And although the rusticated blocks are rough in contrast to Sansovino's smooth ones, they have none of the rude, formless quality so disturbing in the architecture of Giulio Romano (see fig. 18.63). On the ground story (Tuscan) the blocks are rounded and contiguous, on the second (Ionic) square and separated, on the third (Corinthian) rounded and separated. For all its colossal scale and seemingly rustic vigor, the courtyard is ultimately ornamental. The window tabernacles of the second story bear the same relationship to Michelangelo's originals in the vestibule of the Laurentian Library (see fig. 18.11) as does Ammanati's sea nymph to Michelangelo's *Dawn*.

Ammanati took his original designs for the Ponte Santa Trinita (fig. 20.27) to Michelangelo shortly before the latter's death, and the older artist criticized and corrected them. The soaring flight of the roadway over the river, the tension of the three flattened arches below, and the potent simplicity of the wedge-shaped pylons should be credited to Michelangelo, even if some aspects of the design were slightly changed by Ammanati. Ponte Santa Trinita was blown up by the retreating Germans in 1944. When it was rebuilt after the war, the original plans, discovered in the Florentine archives, were used and the stone was taken from the same quarry, located in the Boboli Gardens behind the Palazzo Pitti. Many rank Ponte Santa Trinita among the most beautiful bridges ever created; the subtlety of its proportions and the soaring beauty of its flattened arches are no surprise in the city of Brunelleschi and Michelangelo.



20.26. BARTOLOMMEO AMMANATI. Courtyard, Palazzo Pitti, Florence. 1558–70. Commissioned by Duke Cosimo de' Medici.

20.27. BARTOLOMMEO AMMANATI and MICHELANGELO. Ponte Santa Trinita, Florence. Begun 1566 (rebuilt after 1945). Commissioned by Duke Cosimo de' Medici.

## Giovanni Bologna

The swan song of Late Renaissance sculpture in Florence was performed by a non-Italian who was active in Italy for more than half a century. Jean Boulogne (1529–1608) was born in Douai in Flanders but is generally known by the Italianized versions of his name, Giovanni Bologna or Giambologna. He rapidly absorbed a variety of Italian influences, including those of Donatello, Ghiberti, Verrocchio, Michelangelo, and the artists working at the Florentine court.

Giambologna found ready employment with the Medici of Florence. One of his most elegant and popular works was a figure of *Mercury* (fig. 20.28) that was repeated in several sizes. The example shown here is probably the one commissioned by the Medici for presentation to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II in 1565; in 1580 the Medici commissioned a large version for display at the Villa Medici in Rome. The ancient messenger of the gods is shown in mid-flight borne, apparently, on the tiny wings that decorate his heels and cap. While Giambologna's understanding of the male nude body in vigorous movement is demonstrated, a taste for refined elegance underlies his depiction. The slenderness of the figure trumps its muscularity, while the position of every limb and digit is studied to produce an effect of light gracefulness. Flying is



20.28. GIOVANNI BOLOGNA. *Mercury*. 1565. Bronze, height 24¾" (62.7 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

no effort for this god, it seems, for he has time to self-consciously assume a pose in mid-air.

Giambologna added his own contributions to the statuary of the Piazza della Signoria, including the *Capture of the Sabine Woman* (figs. 20.29–20.30), placed by Grand Duke Francesco I under the Loggia dei Lanzi (see fig. 2.41) in the spot once occupied by Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* (the latter must have seemed too small after it was paired with Cellini's *Perseus*). The subject, drawn from ancient history, tells the story of how the settlers of Rome raided the nearby Sabine population to capture women they could marry. The theme is expressed by only three figures: a Roman, a Sabine woman, and what is apparently her protesting father. But the identification of the subject mattered so little to Giambologna that he had called earlier versions of the same group *Paris and Helen*, *Pluto and Proserpina*, and *Phineus and Andromeda*. His chief interest lay in the energy of the spiral movement and the vitality of the male and female figures, and he

succeeded so well in their rendition that Baroque sculptors, particularly Gianlorenzo Bernini, never forgot this group. The *Capture of the Sabine Women* is also remarkable for having been carved from a single block of marble—perhaps the ultimate Renaissance demonstration of a skill praised by Pliny the Elder in antiquity (see p. 193).

While we have seen an emphasis on demonstrating invention and skill in earlier artists, a lack of interest in the subject matter of a work is a relatively new phenomenon. In this particular case, the content of the work was clearly of more importance to the patron than to the artist, for the placement of a large-scale sculpture representing this theme in the public loggia, paired with Cellini's *Perseus*, equated the idea of victory with the Medici patrons. The function of the works might even be described as apotropaic—threatening. This idea would have been reinforced by the presence of armed Medici soldiers in the loggia, which became known as the Loggia dei Lanzi because of their lances.



20.29, 20.30. GIOVANNI BOLOGNA. *Capture of the Sabine Woman.* 1581–82. Marble, height 13'6" (4.1 m). 🏛 Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence (see fig. 2.41). Commissioned by Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici.
The work is signed OPVS IOANNIS BOLONII FLANDRI MDLXXXII. In 1579 Giambologna made a small bronze group of this subject consisting of two figures (height $39\frac{1}{8}$", 99.5 cm). The surviving studies for the large marble group include a small model of two figures in wax over an armature of an iron nail (height $4\frac{3}{4}$", 12.1 cm), a larger model in red wax over an iron armature (height $18\frac{1}{2}$", 47 cm), and, amazingly, the full-sized clay group from which he worked (now at the Accademia in Florence, in the room next to Michelangelo's *David*). The fact that these studies were preserved may be equated with the sixteenth-century movement to preserve artists' drawings.

France, can be seen as a summary of the stylistic tendencies and moral dilemmas of the age. Its intricate symbolism continues to provoke scholarly interest and controversy; divergent theories have identified the main theme as either the Exposure of Luxury or Venus Disarming Cupid. The bald, winged figure with the hourglass at the upper right is almost certainly Time; he draws back a curtain to unveil a scene that seems to represent incipient incest. Cupid rubs against his mother, Venus, kissing her and squeezing her nipple, while a *putto* (Jest or Folly?) pelts the shameless pair with roses. At the lower left, Venus' doves bill and coo. The screaming figure at the left edge has been identified as an allegory of Jealousy, but another interpretation posits that this figure represents Syphilis. To the right is a monster with the face of a young girl, a serpent's tail, and the hind legs and claws of a lion. She carries a honeycomb in one hand and a scorpionlike stinger in the other, and probably represents Fraud, who lures but stings later. While the choice of the main figures was surely based on Cosimo's knowledge of the king's interest in erotic themes, both the exposure of the group by Time and the stinger of the deceptively beautiful girl seem to add an element of moral condemnation. The difficulty in decoding the many symbols reveals the sixteenth-century interest in iconographic complexity and obscure detail. At the same

time the painting demonstrates a kind of intellectual snobbery in the invention of motifs that are intentionally hard to unravel.

Bronzino's fanatic draftsmanship in the *Allegory* outlines every form, while the figure of Venus is modeled in crystalline light. The different anatomies (male, female, young, old), the pearls, the shining locks of hair, and the glittering masks—symbols of Deceit in the lower right corner—are all set against shimmering silks of piercing green, blue, and violet. The picture was surely meant to impress a foreign ruler with the tremendous skill of the Florentine artistic tradition. The deliberate lasciviousness of these nudes should be contrasted with Michelangelo's figures, who seem to come to us unclothed as if from the mind of God. It is characteristic of the period that the same society that could accept a private picture such as this also added bits of drapery to many of the nudes in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*; Michelangelo was even condemned as salacious by Pietro Aretino, himself one of the most scandalous figures of the age.

One of the most impressive of Bronzino's portraits of the Medici family is that of Cosimo's wife, Eleonora, the daughter of the Spanish viceroy of Naples, and their second son, Giovanni (fig. 20.34); Eleonora's portrait was never painted with her daughters, indicating that this



20.34. BRONZINO. *Eleonora da Toledo and Her Son, Giovanni.* 1545. Oil on panel, 45¼ × 37¾" (115 × 96 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. This is a companion piece to Bronzino's *Portrait of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici in Armor* (not illustrated), which features the symbol of a sprouting laurel, a Medici family symbol (see p. 324), to indicate that he will renew the fortunes and power of the family.

combination of duchess and male heir should be understood as a dynastic icon. The cool detachment of the figures conveys the restraint expected at the Medicean court. The brocade and jewelry, obvious symbols of rank and wealth, allowed Bronzino to demonstrate his skill in representing texture and pattern.

Bronzino decorated the walls and ceiling of a chapel (fig. 20.35) for Eleonora in the Palazzo dei Priori. The technique was unusual, for the underpainting was in true fresco and the finished layer in tempera. The combination of complex figural compositions, rich colors, and elaborate decorative motifs within the chapel's small space creates a bejeweled effect typical of the court of Cosimo and Eleonora. The *Crossing of the Red Sea* (fig. 20.36) was intended to recall Michelangelo's *Deluge* (see fig. 17.25). While this reference showed the artist's knowledge of good art, Bronzino did not repeat any of Michelangelo's poses, demonstrating instead that he could vary the vocabulary



20.35. BRONZINO. Altarpiece and frescoes in the Chapel of Eleonora da Toledo, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. c. 1540–45. Fresco and tempera, size of chapel 16'1" (4.9 m) deep × 12'7" (3.8 m) wide.
The frescoes of the vault represent St. Michael, St. John the Evangelist, St. Jerome, and St. Francis. The left-wall frescoes include *Moses Striking the Rock* (not visible) and *The Gathering of Manna*. For the right wall, see fig. 20.36. The altarpiece of the *Lamentation* seen here is a 1553 copy by Bronzino; Duke Cosimo presented Bronzino's original to a French cardinal as a diplomatic gift.

20.36. BRONZINO. *Crossing of the Red Sea.* c. 1540–45. Fresco. Chapel of Eleonora da Toledo, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

and improvise on a Michelangelesque theme. He tossed figures about with abandon in the rising sea, along with the floating baggage of Pharaoh's army. The well-preserved portions show muscular anatomies that, although lacking Michelangelo's energy, are rendered with all the precision of Bronzino's panel paintings and glow with the same cold, pearly light.

Also characteristic of the Florentine court style are the frescoes by Francesco Salviati (1510–1563) in the Palazzo Sacchetti in Rome (fig. 20.37). Probably representing the havoc wrought by the Ark of the Lord when carried off by the Philistines (I Samuel 4:5–6), the frescoes simulate wall paintings of different proportions and deliberately do not harmonize with the shapes of the windows. All are enclosed in fantastic and distinctive painted frames that are intertwined with a jumble of garlands and apparently sculptured figures. Under the helmet, jar, and vegetables that dangle from one of the frames emerges Father Time, his hands overlapping the simulated marble frame of the lower windows as he steps from his pedestal, so that it seems as if he is about to enter the space of the room. Above the lower window frames, nudes languish in poses of abandoned sensuality, one seen from the back, the other from the front, on draped cloths that almost cover the tops of the window frames. While the original inspiration for such a combination of figures and framed paintings was Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling frescoes, Salviati's intent was clearly to astonish the viewer with added complexity and unexpected juxtapositions. Nothing more contrary to the principles of Renaissance harmony could be imagined, yet all is done with exquisitely refined colors and draftsmanly skill.
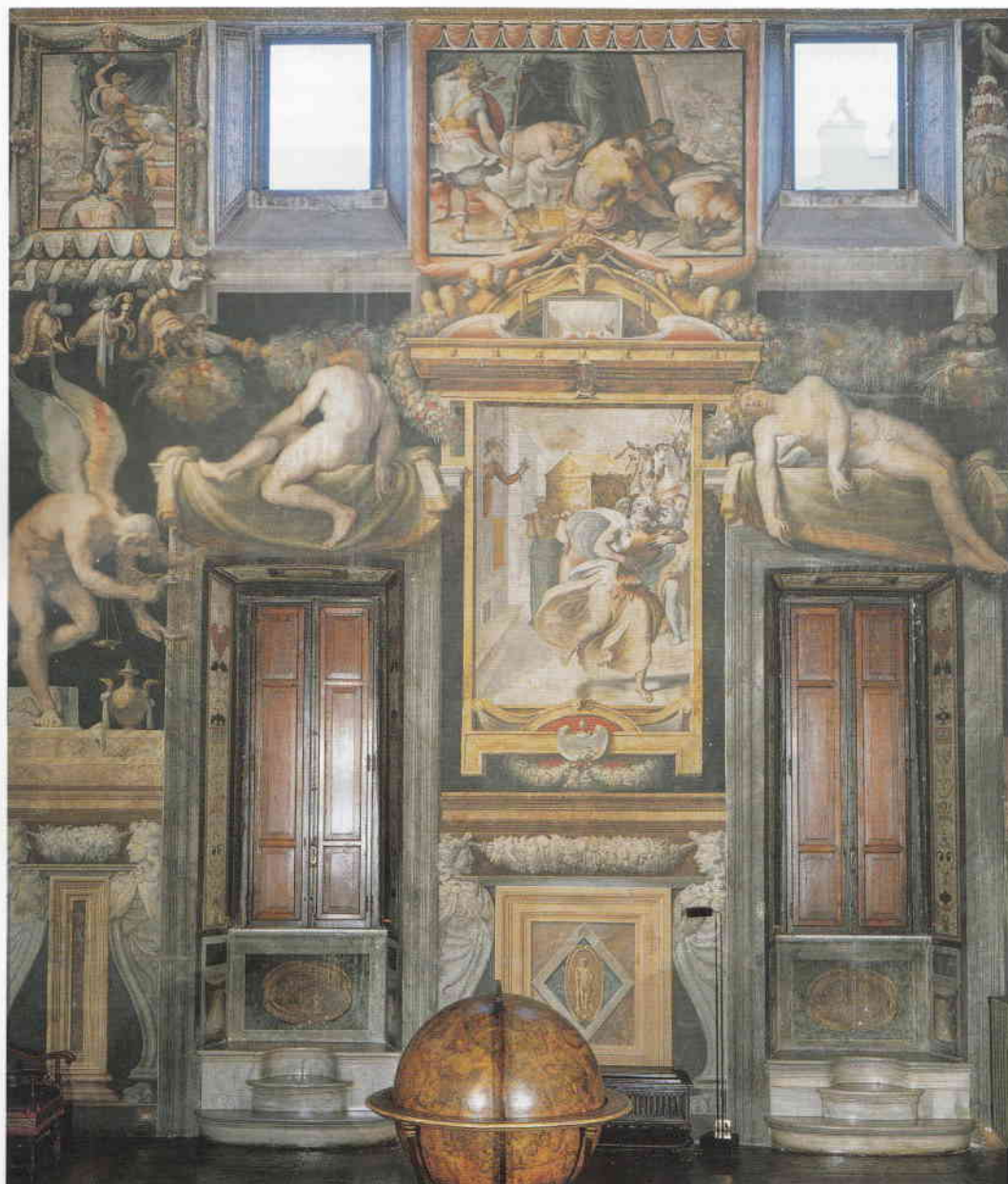
20.37. FRANCESCO SALVIATI. Fresco decoration. c. 1553. Salone, Palazzo Sacchetti, Rome. Probably commissioned by Cardinal Ricci da Montepulciano.

## Later Ceramic Production

The explorations that changed the world view of Europeans during the later fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries brought them into contact with new luxury goods. Porcelain, for example, was unknown in Europe until Chinese examples—strong, pure white, highly glazed, somewhat translucent vessels fired at a high temperature—were introduced in the early years of the sixteenth century. It is no surprise that Europeans prized such wares and wanted to discover the secrets of Chinese production not only for easier access to such fine objects but also for commercial reasons. It was two centuries, however, before the first successful European porcelain factories were established, in Germany. The formula and process for making such porcelain had already been realized by scientists working at the Medici court in Florence in the sixteenth century, but only about sixty works were ever produced, most of which were plates and platters. Apparently Francesco I, the Medici ruler at the time, did not realize or was not interested in the commercial potential of this discovery.

The design of the *Ewer* shown in figure 20.38 is attributed to the Florentine artist and architect Bernardo Buontalenti (1536–1608), who completed Vasari's plans for the Uffizi (see fig. 20.41). The winged grotesque masks that join the handle to the ewer and the combinations of dragons, *putti*, and *rinceaux* that cover the vase are among the typical decorative motifs of sixteenth-century Italy,

*Above:* 20.38. BERNARDO BUONTALENTI (design and modeling attributed to). *Ewer.* c. 1575–78. Soft-paste porcelain with underglaze blue and manganese decoration, height 14½" (36.8 cm). Institute of Arts, Detroit. The coat of arms celebrates the marriage of Francesco I de' Medici to Giovanna of Austria, daughter of Ferdinand I and niece of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

deriving from ancient Roman fresco decorations in the Golden House of Nero and elsewhere. The influence of Chinese porcelain is found in the stylized flowers in arches that surround the base of the ewer.

The *Ewer Basin with Europa and the Bull* of c. 1565–75 (fig. 20.39) is an example not of porcelain but of the more traditional tin-glazed earthenware produced in Italy (see fig. 15.30), and demonstrates the new, more elegant majolica designs of the second half of the sixteenth century. The bold compositions with large-scale figures that had been popular earlier (see fig. 17.75) have here given way to smaller scenes, and the rest of the vessel is adorned with the same grotesque decoration discussed above. When the ewer (now lost) that was a part of this ensemble was in place, the mythological subject, taken from Ovid, would not even have been visible; decoration in this case trumps iconography—yet another indication of the late sixteenth-century emphasis on style over substance.
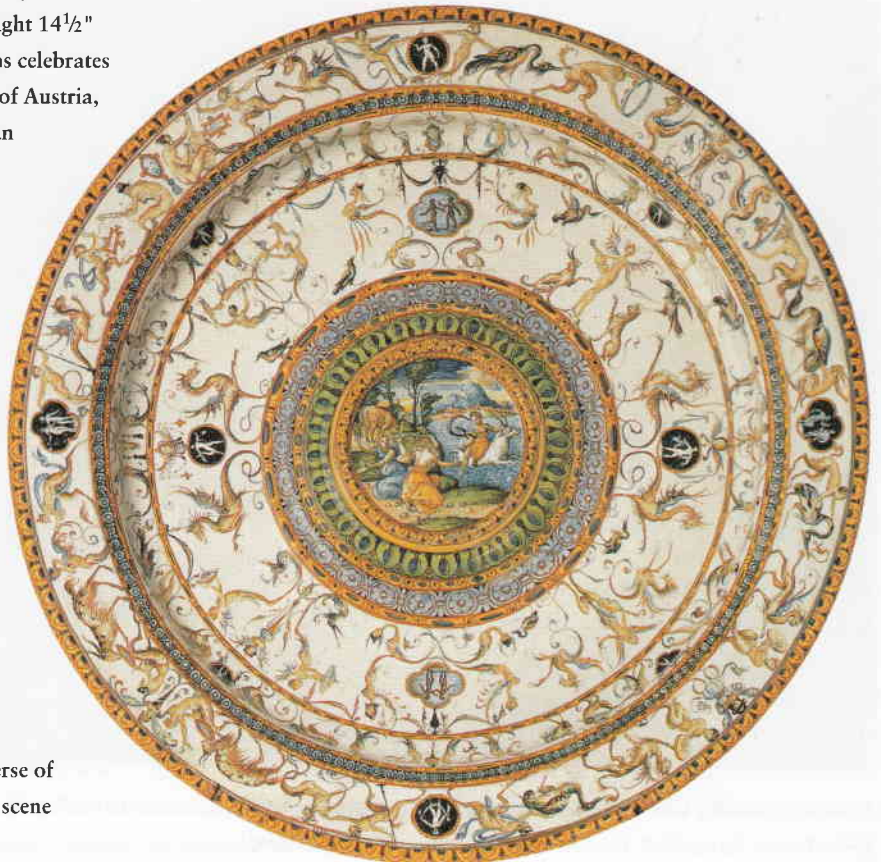


20.39. Urbino workshop of the FONTANA family. *Ewer Basin with Europa and the Bull.* c. 1565–75. Tin-glazed earthenware, diameter 17¾" (45.1 cm). Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The reverse of this basin features similar decorative motifs with the scene of *Cadmus and the Dragon* in the center roundel.

## Giorgio Vasari and the *Studiolo*

The artist who became the culminating figure in Medici court art was Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), whose biographies of artists and architects provide so much information about this period. So successful was Vasari's formula for inventing figures and compositions, so slight his necessity for further study from nature, so well disciplined his army of assistants, that with their aid he was able to cover numerous Florentine and Roman walls and ceilings with frescoes and oil paintings. While these are often unreal and pompous, they seldom lack decorative effect or historical interest. Enormous altarpieces from his workshop line the aisles of Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, and other Florentine churches; vast battle scenes and decorative and dynastic works fill the halls and smaller chambers of the Palazzo dei Priori. His *Paul III Farnese Directing the Continuance of St. Peter's* (fig. 20.40), painted before Michelangelo was appointed architect by the pope, forms part of the decorations of the Cancelleria in Rome, a cardinal's palace converted in the Cinquecento into offices for the pontifical government. Vasari and his pupils painted the frescoes lining the great hall in one hundred working days; he boasted of this to Michelangelo, who replied, "Si vede bene" ("So one sees").

In Vasari's fresco, Doric porticoes frame concave, semicircular steps based on Bramante's design for the fountain of the Vatican Belvedere. Paul III is followed by Renaissance architects, including Bramante, but his attendants are allegorical figures in classical costume. The pope lifts one Michelangelesque hand to point to the unfinished St. Peter's (see p. 656), while with the other he approves the plan of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, held up by figures who are identified as the Arts of Design and Construction by the tools that they hold or that lie on the steps below. At the right the Tiber, his elbow and foot propped on books, reclines on the steps, embracing the papal tiara and holding an umbrella sheltering the papal crossed keys. The style is elaborate and learned, with borrowings from Michelangelo and Raphael. The emphasis on symbolism that is both complex and obvious, perhaps even trite, is also typical of the period. In the end, what seems odd is that Vasari's taste



20.40. GIORGIO VASARI. *Pope Paul III Farnese Directing the Continuance of St. Peter's*, from a cycle of the life of Pope Paul III Farnese. 1544. Fresco. Great Hall, Palazzo della Cancelleria, Rome. Commissioned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

is so far removed from that of the Renaissance, about which he knew more than any of his contemporaries.

Vasari's most important architectural commission was the Uffizi ("Offices"), a large structure commissioned by Cosimo I to house the functions and records of his government and to impress Tuscans with the vastness of his bureaucracy (fig. 20.41). By unifying the region's administration, the building expressed the political unity achieved by Cosimo. Its four stories line three sides of a space that is more like a street than a piazza, the grand scale and urban presence expressing Medicean power. The Uffizi derives its effect from the repetition of elements: paired Tuscan columns between piers on the ground story, while on the second story triplets of mezzanine windows alternate with Michelangelesque consoles. The third story again features triads of windows, and the open loggia of



20.41. GIORGIO VASARI. Uffizi, Florence. 1559–80s.
Completed by Bernardo Buontalenti and Alfonso Parigi.
Commissioned by Cosimo I de' Medici.
The basic outlines of the plan may have been suggested to Vasari by Cosimo I. The building initially housed the offices of the thirteen administrative authorities of the Medicean state—a function revealed in the piers that divide the loggie into distinct units with an entrance door for each of the offices. The upper floor of the building now houses the important art museum that includes treasures from the Medici collections and many additional works.

the fourth (now enclosed) repeats the Tuscan columns of the ground story. The only break in the uniformity comes at the end, where a central arch, framing a figure of Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici, opens a vista toward the Arno River.

Vasari's structure incorporated existing buildings, including private houses and almost the entire church of San Piero Scheraggio, where Dante had spoken and many important events of republican Florence had taken place. The Uffizi's façades mask the disparity of old and new buildings evident when one looks at the structure from the back. The huge complex, so rapidly remodeled, strung together, and refaced, contained such extensive openings and reached such a height that Vasari had to use steel girders to reinforce it—one of the earliest known instances of metal architecture.

Vasari may have been the most prolific Italian—perhaps even European—artist of the sixteenth century. In addition to architecture and painting, he designed festivals for the Medici court that were noted for their iconographic complexity, and marshaled and managed the forces needed to produce floats and costumes quickly. He collected drawings (see fig. 1.20), and designed woodcut frames and portraits for the second edition of the *Lives* (see fig. 18.37).

Vasari also played a key role, along with Vincenzo Borghini, a leading intellectual of the period, in the creation of a *studiolo* for Francesco I de' Medici, son and successor of Cosimo I (fig. 20.42). This tiny chamber within the Palazzo dei Priori, accessible by a hidden spiral staircase, was dedicated to organizing and displaying the geological, mineralogical, and alchemical interests of this self-centered and largely ineffectual ruler. Francesco dismantled the *studiolo* in 1586, but the paintings and sculptures survived and were remounted in the original space in the twentieth century. The reconstruction lacks Francesco's large cabinet-desk, for which the room was named, and the cabinets that displayed his treasures, and so only approximates the original effect. The walls, each dedicated to one of the four elements, were lined with two tiers of oil paintings on slate or panel that acted as doors for cupboards containing Francesco's scientific books, specimens, and instruments. Two doors, not distinguished in any way from the cupboard doors, covered the only windows: Francesco preferred to work by candlelight. The intimate scale of the project allowed Vasari and his pupils to develop their imaginative abilities, technical skill, and a jewel-like delicacy of color. Eight sculptors made bronze statuettes, and the paintings, which include images of Francesco's parents, were by no fewer than twenty-three artists. This precious chamber is the only sixteenth-century room in Europe to survive with its oil paintings intact, albeit reconstructed.

20.42. GIORGIO VASARI and others. Studiolo. 1570–75; reconstructed, twentieth century. Oil paintings on slate, bronze statuettes, stucco decoration with frescoes in the vault. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici.

Vasari's contributions include the *Perseus and Andromeda* (fig. 20.43). Legend states that when Perseus held up the head of Medusa and plunged his sword into the dragon that was about to attack Andromeda, the dragon turned to stone and its blood, streaming through the water, turned into coral. In the foreground Andromeda is chained to the



**20.43. GIORGIO VASARI.** *Perseus and Andromeda.* 1570–72. Oil on slate, 46 × 39¼" (117 × 100 cm). 🏛 Studiolo, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici.

rock while mermaids retrieve branches of coral. In the background, stylized promontories sparkle with classical buildings, and on the beach workmen draw the dragon onto land with an enormous winch.

Just as toylike and unreal is the *Pearl Fishers* (fig. 20.44) by Bronzino's follower Alessandro Allori (1535–1607), whose style imitates the cool, smooth manner of his teacher. Exquisite male and female nudes, human and mythological, play about on rocks, dive off boats, and bring up shells overflowing with sea water and pearls. Over and over the figures quote Michelangelo (the central nude seen from the back comes straight out of the *Battle of Cascina*; see fig. 16.42), but only in the most playful way. Another of Allori's sources was Michelangelo's *Deluge* in the Sistine Chapel (see fig. 17.25), but the traumas of the original are muted by Allori's predominantly pink and blue coloring.

While most of the artists seem to have worked contentedly in the Medici court style, three painters suggest the possibility of reform: Santi di Tito (1536–1603) and two painters hardly known outside the *studiolo*—Mirabello Cavalori (1535–1572) and Girolamo Macchietti (1535–1592). Cavalori and Macchietti were assigned or selected subjects from daily life, and their depictions are remarkable for their naturalism. Perhaps in an attempt to make their paintings conform to their courtly setting, the backgrounds have grand architectural settings featuring the severe Tuscan order.

The devotion to naturalism in Cavalori's *Wool Factory* (fig. 20.45) cannot be paralleled, even in Lombardy. Perhaps Cavalori made sketches in a wool factory, of which there were many in Florence, for in his painting people do what they are doing because they have to, not because they are forced into artistic poses to reflect the artist's knowledge of the works of Michelangelo. Cavalori's men are not nude to display the beauty of their anatomy; they have stripped because they are hot, displaying far-from-ideal bodies wearing Cinquecento undershorts. In fact, the only "nudes" are those carrying firewood, stuffing it into the flames, or churning the masses of wool in the boiling caldron. Behind them a wringer is being twisted, and at the top of the steps the wool, wound on a huge spindle, is being carded. Cavalori seems to have taken special pleasure in representing the felt hats and peaked caps of the workmen. No abstract scheme, either imposed upon the figures or derived from



20.44. ALESSANDRO ALLORI. *Pearl Fishers.* 1570–72. Oil on slate, 45½ × 34" (116 × 86 cm). 🏛 Studiolo, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici.



20.45. MIRABELLO CAVALORI. *Wool Factory.* 1570–72. Oil on slate, 50 × 35⅞" (127 × 91 cm). 🏛 Studiolo, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici.

them, unites their activities, but a strong side light gives deep shadows, uniformly smooth brushwork suggests textures, and a hectic sense of hard labor under pressure is expressed. We can see, feel, hear, and even, it seems, smell the factory. Yet there is the grand architectural setting and, in spite of everything, an effect of Renaissance nobility. Grand Duke Francesco may have liked such proletarian pictures as oddities, especially since the wealth of his dominion still depended largely on wool. The *Wool Factory*, however, was not the kind of picture calculated to gain Cavalori lucrative public commissions.

Girolamo Macchietti's *Baths at Pozzuoli* (fig. 20.46) is similar to the *Wool Factory* in its naturalistic concept and smooth pictorial style. One can hardly expect that these hot-spring baths, not far from Naples, were set in architecture of such grandeur, and most likely Macchietti had never seen them. He probably studied and sketched in the Florentine public baths, as did Leonardo and Michelangelo; the resemblance of the youth reclining on the steps and the seated figure having his leg toweled to their counterparts in Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina* (see fig. 16.42) seem due not to imitation but to the fact that such poses could be seen daily in any public bath. A statue of Asklepius, god of health, presides over the scene from the left, but so
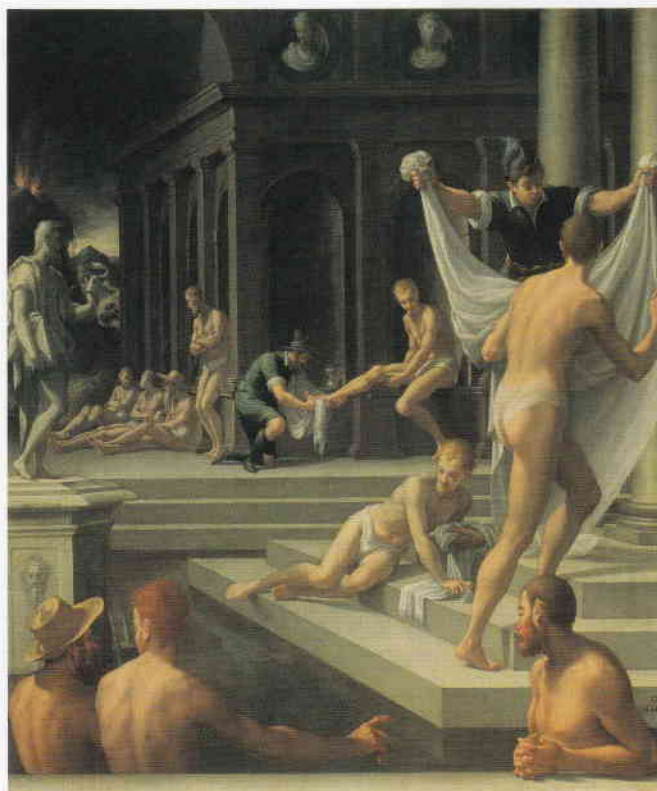


20.46. GIROLAMO MACCHIETTI. *Baths at Pozzuoli*. 1570–72. Oil on slate, 46 × 39¼" (117 × 100 cm). 🏛 Studiolo, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici.

unobtrusively that he almost seems to be one of the bathers. Here, too, one feels the temperature as the figures in the foreground stand happily in the warm, medicinal water.

Mavericks such as Cavalori and Macchietti were ahead of their time, but in 1564 Vasari included them among the painters selected to provide pictures for the catafalque to solemnize Michelangelo's funeral in San Lorenzo.

We have come full circle. From the moment of its construction, the Palazzo dei Priori had been the home of the Florentine Republic, and its simplicity and power had symbolized the qualities of individual character so important for the republic. Through two and a half centuries these qualities, in crisis and in triumph, had inspired one of the great periods in the history of human artistic imagination. By 1530 the republic was over, and it is ironic that the massive building, deprived of its original meaning, should have provided the setting for an absolutist ruler who divined secret mysteries by artificial light. In the works by Cavalori and Macchietti, the Palazzo dei Priori became a womb for the germination of a new vision of reality.

## Developments Elsewhere

To conclude, we turn our attention to developments outside of Florence, some of which can be related to the Florentine court style and others that demonstrate new interests that will lead into the seventeenth century.

## Giuseppe Arcimboldo

Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527?–1593), born and trained in Italy, found his greatest success in northern Europe, where he worked for the Hapsburg emperors Ferdinand I, Maximilian II, and Rudolf II. Like most Renaissance artists, Arcimboldo was hired to design and/or produce many different kinds of objects, including oil paintings, frescoes, stained-glass windows and tapestries, festivals and costumes, and an altar *baldacchino*. He was also commissioned to purchase antiquities and unusual objects for the emperors' collections. Today he is known largely for a remarkable series of fantastic, composite heads.

*Fire* (fig. 20.47), from a series of paintings representing the *Four Elements*, is the most vivacious of the group because of the vivid colors and apparently brisk movement with which the flames have been painted. Other objects related to fire are wittily incorporated: matches, a lighted oil lamp, a long wick, and candles. Steel objects used for striking sparks suggest nose and ear, while cannon and a pistol form the torso. The other paintings in the *Elements* series are *Air*, composed completely of birds; *Water*, with fish, mollusks, and shellfish; and *Earth*, which features four-legged mammals with the antlers of stags forming the

20.47. GIUSEPPE ARCIMBOLDO. *Fire*, from *The Four Elements*. 1566. Panel, 26⅛ × 20⅛" (66.5 × 51 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. *Fire* is signed with Arcimboldo's name and the indication that he was Milanese in origin.

hair. Arcimboldo also painted the *Four Seasons*, in which *Spring* is composed entirely of flowers and *Summer* of ripening grain. Other works include *King Herod*, composed entirely of the bodies of babies; *The Librarian*, made up of books; and a bowl of vegetables that becomes a head when turned upside down.

Poems presented at court reveal that some of these engaging paintings were intended as allegories on Hapsburg imperial rule; the pendant on Fire's chest, for example, features the double-headed Hapsburg eagle. When Arcimboldo represented *Emperor Rudolf II as Vertumnus*, god of the seasons, he was suggesting that the Hapsburg emperor not only ruled the seasons but, being made up of roses, cabbage leaves, squash, cherries, grapes, peaches, and ears of grain, he *was* the seasons. The natural world exists to serve its rightful ruler. Despite the serious underlying content, Arcimboldo's witty and entertaining paintings were admired in the sixteenth-century for the same reasons we enjoy them today: as examples of a remarkably creative talent. Arcimboldo continued to work

for the Hapsburgs after he returned to Milan in 1587, and in 1592 he was rewarded with the title of Count Palatine.

## Lavinia Fontana

Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614) was the daughter of the painter Prospero Fontana, who had trained with a pupil of Raphael and worked as an assistant to Vasari in Rome and Florence. Lavinia, raised and trained in Bologna, studied with her father and became a successful artist who worked for several popes. She specialized in portraits and was the first woman accepted into the prestigious Accademia di San Luca, the organization of painters in Rome. Of her self-portraits, one of the most interesting seems to be a marriage portrait (fig. 20.48). While the empty easel refers to her career as a painter, she showed herself as a musician, playing a spinet while a servant holds the music. As important as her accomplishments in art and music are the suggestions of status, wealth, and personal dignity seen in her pose, clothing, and jewelry, which confirm her success as a

20.48. LAVINIA FONTANA. *Self-Portrait at the Spinet.* 1577. Oil on canvas, 10⅝ × 9½" (27 × 24 cm). Accademia di San Luca, Rome. Sitting on the spinet is a piece of coral carved into the shape of a love knot, a symbol of betrothal. The inscription on the painting, "Lavinia, the unmarried daughter of Prospero Fontana, took this, her image, from the mirror, 1577," indicates that the painting was made before Fontana's marriage that same year to Giovan Paolo Zappi, a fellow pupil in her father's studio. They had eleven children, and it is said that Zappi assisted Lavinia by painting the backgrounds and costumes in some of her works.



20.49. LAVINIA FONTANA. *Noli me tangere.* 1581. Oil on canvas, 31½ × 25¾" (80 × 65.5 cm). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. By the seventeenth century this painting was in the collection of Don Antonio de' Medici, but there is no evidence that it was commissioned by a member of the Medici family.

painter. In another painting now in the Medici self-portrait collection in the Uffizi (not illustrated), Fontana painted herself preparing to draw from some of the antiquities and copies of antique works in her personal collection. The emphasis on details of costume and rank in Fontana's works accords well with the courtly style of the later sixteenth century.

Although her fame came as a portraitist, Fontana also produced small paintings of religious subjects intended for private devotion, as well as the occasional mythological theme. Her *Noli Me Tangere* ("Touch Me Not"; fig. 20.49) illustrates the scene when Mary Magdalen recognizes Christ on Easter Sunday morning even though he is dressed as a gardener. Because he has been resurrected he asks her not to touch him in words that give this subject its common name (Mark 16:9, John 20:17). In the background a glowing angel tells figures gathered at the tomb that Christ has risen. While the carefully studied pose of

Christ conveys the elegance of the popular courtly style, the Magdalen's earnest effort to embrace Christ reveals Fontana's abilities in the representation of narrative.

## Giacomo da Vignola and Giacomo della Porta

Jacopo Barozzi (1507–1573), born in Vignola, near Bologna, is known as Giacomo da Vignola. He started as a painter under the tutelage of Sebastiano Serlio, the architect and perspective painter best known for his treatise *General Rules for Architecture* (*Regole generali di architettura*) and for his role in carrying the style of the Renaissance to France. Serlio had studied under Peruzzi in Rome, and thus Vignola was brought into contact with High Renaissance tradition before he arrived in Rome in 1530. There he worked with Peruzzi and Antonio da Sangallo the

20.50. GIACOMO DA VIGNOLA. Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola. Begun 1559. Commissioned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, grandson of Pope Paul III.

Younger in the Vatican and was employed in finishing the Palazzo Farnese and, after 1564, St. Peter's itself.

Vignola's work reveals his desire to revive and codify the Bramantesque tradition—an ambition not unusual for this era of treatises and standardization. Instead of inventing their own capitals, as had so many Quattrocento architects and indeed Michelangelo himself, late sixteenth-century architects were generally content with copying Bramante's capitals for St. Peter's. But Vignola settled the course of classical architecture for the next three and a half centuries with his *Rules for the Five Architectural Orders* (*Regole delli cinque ordini di architettura*), first published in 1562 and reprinted in innumerable editions until the tradition of classical architectural training died out in the twentieth century. In this work, thirty-two illustrations established principles for the design, proportions, and employment of the orders then recognized—Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite—including shafts, capitals, bases, and entablatures. All were based on ancient Roman models.

Neither experience in completing Michelangelo's buildings nor collaboration with Vasari and Ammanati seems to have had any effect on Vignola other than to reinforce his classicism. His Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola is perhaps the most overwhelming secular building of the Renaissance because of the combination of its dimensions, its hilltop site, and its grand proportions (fig. 20.50). Vignola was faced with an unusual problem, for the commission required the palazzo to be built atop a pre-existing pentagonal fortress. It appears, however, to be square in plan, which explains Michel de Montaigne's 1581 comment that it is "pentagonal in form, but looks like a pure rectangle. Inside it is perfectly round." The tension between the five sides of the fortress pedestal and our expectation of four for the palazzo is an unexpected source of pleasure in the design. Vignola reinforced the angles of the fortress with

quoins and crowned it with a cornice and parapet. On the lowest level, a rusticated entrance leads into service areas, while balustraded ramps lead upward to a matching entrance directly above, flanked by pedimented windows. The corner bastions of the first two stories are continued, still with quoins, in the upper stories. Between these enframing corners a seven-bay order stretches across each



20.51. GIACOMO DA VIGNOLA. Courtyard, Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola. Designed c. 1558–59, completed by 1579. Diameter approx. 67'3" (20 m). The barrel-vaulted portico that surrounds the courtyard was decorated with forty-six frescoed coats of arms of the Farnese and related families, and with busts of the first twelve Roman emperors, whom the Farnese seem to have been claiming as ancestors.

façade, with Ionic on the second story and Corinthian on the third and fourth. On the main façade at second-floor level, a loggia (now enclosed) opens to a view over the surrounding hills and valleys. Windows fill these bays on the other sides. A pair of formal gardens in the back emphasizes the pentagonal form, following the geometrical plan characteristic of Renaissance gardens.

Internally, the palazzo is set around a circular courtyard. The idea of such a courtyard had been mentioned by Alberti, who equated it with the round plans of some ancient temples, and a small example had been built in Mantua at the house of the painter Mantegna. In the example at the Palazzo Farnese (fig. 20.51), rusticated arches uphold a *piano nobile* of paired Ionic engaged columns flanking arches, culminating in a balustrade with urns that conceals the setback third story. The courtyard thus appears as a revival, in circular form, of the two-story scheme of Bramante's Palazzo Caprini (see fig. 17.19). The palazzo's dramatic spiral staircase (fig. 20.52), composed of paired Tuscan columns, recalls the spiral ramp built by Bramante as part of the Vatican Belvedere.

Vignola is best known today for the interior of Il Gesù in Rome. The patron was the Jesuit order, for whom Il

Gesù was the mother church. The commission, however, was supported financially by the patron of the palazzo at Caprarola, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. Vignola's plan for Il Gesù (figs. 20.53–20.54) is virtually identical to that of Alberti's Sant'Andrea in Mantua (see fig. 10.8) except that Vignola's plan is even more compact because his transepts are no deeper than the chapels that flank the
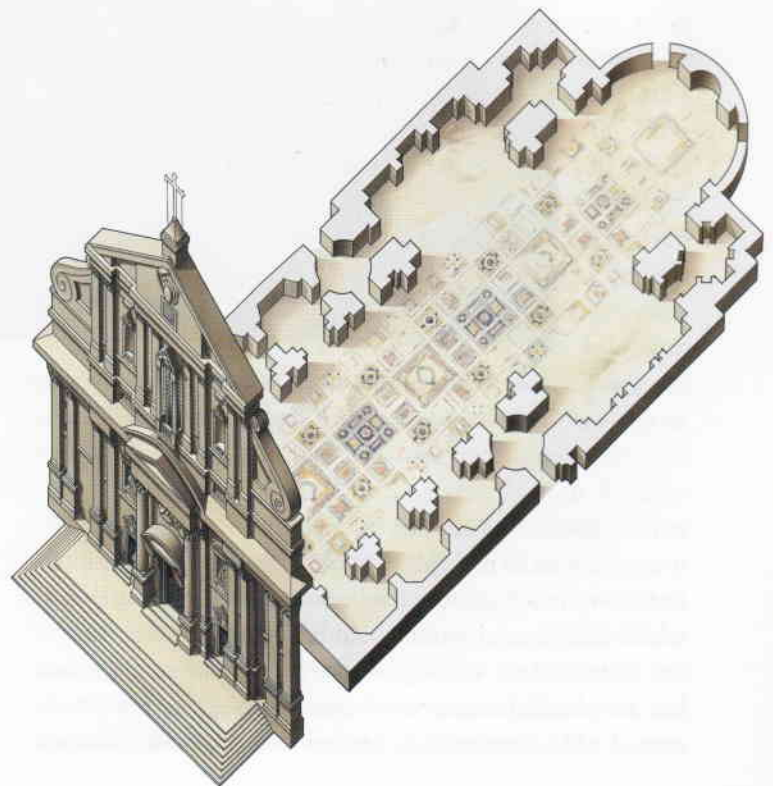


20.53. GIACOMO DA VIGNOLA and GIACOMO DELLA PORTA. Façade and plan, Il Gesù, Rome. Initial construction begun 1568, façade c. 1575–84, dedicated 1584. Commissioned by the Jesuits with the support of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

20.54. GIACOMO DA VIGNOLA. Interior, Il Gesù, Rome, as seen in a painting by Andrea Sacchi and Jan Miel (1639–41; Galleria d'Arte Antica, Rome). Begun 1568.

nave. Vignola and the Jesuits must have realized that the interior of Alberti's plan created the perfect Counter-Reformation space: a unified area without distractions in which complete attention could be focused on the ritual of the Mass and the message of the priest. The result, grand but simple, influenced later church design as the Jesuits spread the message of the revived Catholic Church throughout the world. Vignola submitted a design for the façade of Il Gesù, but the one offered by Giacomo della Porta (c. 1533–1602) was chosen. Like Vignola's interior, della Porta's façade (fig. 20.55) became the prototype for later Baroque developments in Rome and elsewhere. The articulation of the façade with pilasters, half-columns, and pediments was clearly based on earlier Renaissance designs

20.55. GIACOMO DELLA PORTA. Façade, Il Gesù, Rome. c. 1575–84. Travertine. Commissioned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, who spent an estimated 100,000 scudi on the building and decoration of Il Gesù.

(see figs. 18.3, 19.68), but he manipulated the traditional elements in a sequence that builds towards a climax at the central portal. The paired pilasters at the sides become three as we move inward, and at the center those flanking the doors become half columns. The broken cornice above juts in and out to emphasize the three-dimensional rhythm. This invitation to enter the church is enhanced by two bold pediments, rounded above the pilasters and pointed over the half-columns. On the upper story, another broken cornice adds to the vigorous rhythm of della Porta's façade. The harmony of Renaissance architecture here gives way to dramatic effects that will become more pronounced in Counter-Reformation Roman architecture. Despite its date, Il Gesù has been called the first Baroque church.

## Federico Barocci

Ironically, the Emilian architect Vignola based his style on that of Bramante of Urbino, while the painter Federico Barocci (1526–1612) from Urbino dedicated much of his life to reviving the inventions of the Emilian artist Correggio. And as Vignola was, with the exception of Michelangelo, the most powerful architect in central Italy during the 1550s and 1560s, so Barocci was the most significant painter in that region between Michelangelo's death in 1564 and the arrival in Rome of Caravaggio and the Carracci in the 1590s. Barocci's long career overlapped the beginnings of the Baroque style, and he appears to have had a considerable effect on later painters, including Rubens. Although Barocci was profoundly influenced by the works of Correggio and the Venetian painters, we are still uncertain where and under what circumstances he saw their works. During two trips to Rome he studied the work of Raphael and became friends with Federico Zuccari, the leader of a refined Roman style based on Florentine developments. Barocci left Rome in 1563, in poor health and with the suspicion that he had been poisoned, presumably by a jealous rival. Thereafter, he seldom left his mountain home at Urbino, where the classicism of his illustrious forebears, Piero della Francesca, Bramante, and Raphael, seems to have held little meaning for him.

20.56. FEDERICO BAROCCI. *Madonna del Popolo*. 1575–79. Panel, 11'9⅜" × 8'3¼" (3.6 × 2.5 m). Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Commissioned by the Confraternity of the Misericordia, Arezzo.

The influence of Correggio on Barocci's mature work is especially evident in his celebrated *Madonna del Popolo* (fig. 20.56). Barocci emphasized the dramatic instant of the Virgin's intercession for her people before a loving Christ. The scene is caught up in a bewitching fusion of everyday experience with otherworldly rapture. In the surging crowd below, an elegantly dressed mother tries to interest her children in the heavenly apparition, but they are attracted by the beggar in the foreground and the blind player of the *vielle*—a popular four-stringed instrument operated by a crank. At the extreme lower right a brown-and-white puppy appeals to the spectator. With almost no gap between earthly byplay and heavenly apparition, the viewer looks up over the heads of mothers with baskets to discover child-angels who support a beautiful Virgin, her hands spread gracefully in appeal. Christ appears to bless the crowd, while the dove of the Holy Spirit soars over their heads. Light plays over figures, faces, and bright garments as if through colored mists, while Correggiesque smiles play across the faces. In the dissolving colors and smiling charm of the subjects, we seem to have left the solemnity and tensions of the late Cinquecento far behind. Barocci's excitement in his discoveries and his enthusiastic study of color, movement, and light are a reminder of the accomplishments of some earlier Renaissance artists.

## Fede Galizia

Like Lavinia Fontana, Fede Galizia (1578–1630) was able to receive training because she was the daughter of a painter. She was born in Milan and spent most of her professional career there. When she was twelve years old, an important theorist and friend of her father wrote that "[T]his girl dedicates herself to imitate our most extraordinary art," suggesting both that her accomplishment was exceptional because of her gender and that imitation was all that could be expected of her. Galizia, however, went on to paint portraits and altarpieces, as well as a number of highly detailed still-life paintings, a subject that was relatively new to Italian art at this time.

Galizia's *Portrait of Paolo Morigia* (fig. 20.57), painted when she was eighteen, is unlike anything we have seen before. The suave elegance and colorful fabrics we have come to expect from north Italian portraits (see figs. 19.35–19.36) are eclipsed by this apparently unidealized representation of the seventy-one-year-old scholar and historian at work. Simply dressed and surrounded by research books, Morigia is represented looking up from writing verses about Fede, whom he praised in his book on Milanese society published the following year. He has removed his glasses, allowing Galizia to demonstrate her ability to paint remarkable reflections on convex lenses. The inscrip-
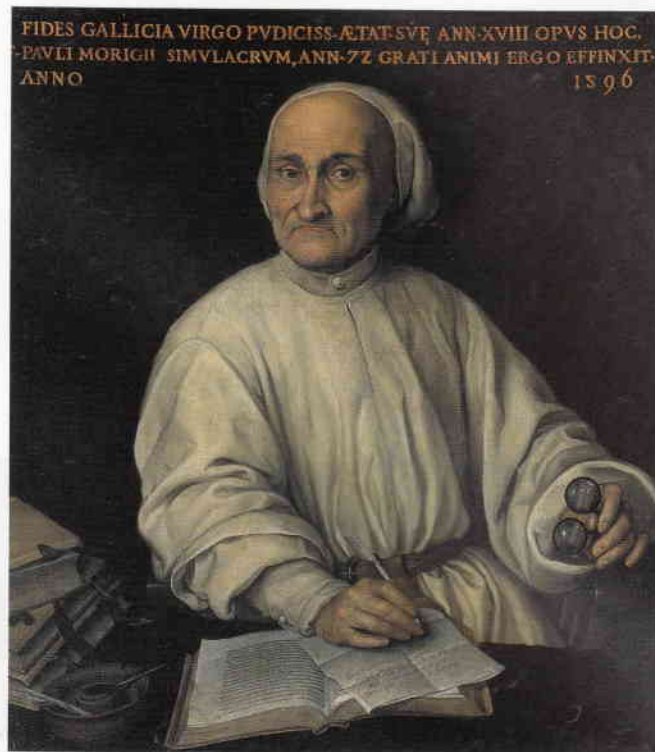


20.57. FEDE GALIZIA. *Portrait of Paolo Morigia*. 1596. Oil on canvas, 34⅝ × 31¹/₁₈" (88 × 79 cm). Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

tion at the top denies the painting's powerful illusion but was surely added later. Galizia's style is sharply linear and her light is harsh and unflattering; we come away from viewing the portrait as if we had just experienced an encounter with a remarkable character. The intense detail that we see here harks back to the late Quattrocento discovery of the potential of oil paint (see figs. 13.32, 13.37) and can also be related to the tradition of Lombard naturalism (see figs. 5.21, 5.24). The realistic treatment of the subject, however, looks forward to the emphasis on everyday life that became important in seventeenth-century art.

## Caravaggio

The *Madonna di Loreto* (fig. 20.58) by Caravaggio brings our discussion of painting to a close. Two poor pilgrims, possibly a mother and son, kneel at the shrine of the Holy House of Loreto, the humble home of the Virgin Mary, which was believed to have been brought to northern Italy by angels in 1294 (see p. 378). The Virgin and Christ Child appear and look down toward the devout pilgrims, and Christ blesses them.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1573–1610), whose paintings are usually used to introduce Baroque art, can also be understood as the heir of the Renaissance developments we have been studying. The interest in

naturalism that has been part of our story since the fourteenth century explains both the solid weight of his figures, which is emphasized by Caravaggio's use of strong light, and the subtlety with which he rendered details: the velvet of the Madonna's red garment, the soft hair of the Christ Child, the broken plaster of her house, the dust on the soles of the pilgrim's feet. To achieve an effect of greater immediacy for this vision, however, Caravaggio created an intimate scene, avoiding the distant backgrounds found in so many Renaissance paintings. He kept his life-sized figures in the foreground so that the encounter between the holy figures and the pilgrims is direct, almost as if they can touch. The setting, while intended to be Loreto, is generic enough to be any Italian doorway.

The slender proportions of the Madonna, the elegance of her standing pose—the cult statue at the Holy House of Loreto is a standing figure—and the refined gesture with which she holds her heavy child can all be related to the courtly manner of the late sixteenth century. They serve to distinguish her from the sturdy worshippers, while her simple garments, uncovered head, and bare feet establish a connection between the peasants and their vision.



20.58. CARAVAGGIO.
*Madonna di Loreto.* c. 1604–6.
8'6" × 4'11" (2.6 × 1.5 m).
🏛 Sant'Agostino, Rome.
Commissioned by the family of
Eremete Cavalletti, who was a
member of the Archconfraternity
of the Most Holy Trinity of the
Pilgrims and Convalescents, a
charitable group founded to
care for poor pilgrims who came
to Rome.

The dusty feet of the pilgrim are set right at the beginning of the pictorial space—a detail that challenges the traditions of grace and beauty that had been so important for many Quattrocento and Cinquecento artists and patrons.

Caravaggio's departure from Renaissance developments is also evident when we compare his *Madonna di Loreto* with earlier images in which human figures confront the divine, such as Giotto's Enrico Scrovegni at Padua (see fig. 3.14), the husband and wife in Masaccio's *Trinity* (see fig. 8.21), or the male members of the Pesaro family in Titian's *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* (see fig. 19.15). In those paintings, the human figures are well-to-do members of society who are represented as specific individuals, reflecting the Renaissance interest in the individual and the concomitant development of portraiture. Caravaggio's pilgrims, on the other hand, are neither patrons nor identifiable people. They suggest the devotion of humanity in general and that of pilgrims in particular. Like Masaccio's apostles (see figs. 8.9–8.10), they seem like familiar types. We identify with them more easily than with the persons shown in the earlier works. Since pilgrimage is a metaphor for the individual search for salvation, Caravaggio's depiction was designed to touch each viewer. The painting is still in situ in the chapel for which it was painted, in a church located on the route taken by pilgrims on their way to St. Peter's Basilica. By placing these large-scale figures in an intimate setting with the divine, Caravaggio demonstrated the new respect for the poor that was important in early seventeenth-century culture and art. His representation supports the Counter-Reformation belief that the teachings of the Catholic Church are available for everyone, not just the elite and wealthy who were so often featured in the art of the Renaissance.

## Sixtus V and the Urban Plan of Rome

Our final discussion demonstrates once again how Renaissance developments were inspired by the past while looking toward the future. When Sixtus V was named pope in 1585, he established an ambitious program of restoring and renewing the city of Rome and its monuments. A print made only four years later (fig. 20.59) surrounds his portrait with buildings and places that had already experienced his attention, including several that have been discussed here.

Sixtus V's most enduring work, however, is suggested by the obelisks seen in the upper corners of the print. Although several of the pope's predecessors had tried to reform the plan of Rome by establishing new streets, Sixtus's vision went much further and still plays a role in the visitor's

experience of Rome. He established a series of new straight streets that lead from Rome's northern portal across the urban fabric to climax at two important pilgrimage sites, Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. To mark intersections and monuments, Sixtus moved some of the ancient Egyptian obelisks brought to Rome in ancient times so that they became visual guides in this urban scheme. The pope's decision to reuse these obelisks as focal points for roads leading to important Christian sites was yet another indication of how the Church appropriated the world of antiquity for its own purposes.

Although Sixtus was planning for the short term, in expectation of the pilgrims who would visit Rome for the Jubilee of 1600, these obelisks continue to function as he envisioned them. One of the streets he created took Sixtus' given name, Felice Peretti. It is tempting to interpret the name of Via Felice broadly, since *felice* in Italian means "happy" or "blessed." On the one hand, Via Felice might refer to the joy the pope's contemporaries must have felt at the efficiency offered by his new urban plan. But *felice* might also be an appropriate term to encapsulate our experience of the study of Italian Renaissance art.



20.59. GIOVANNI PINADELLO. *Sixtus V and His Roman Building Projects.* 1589. Etching. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

# GLOSSARY

This glossary is limited to the most frequently used terms. Cross-references are indicated by the use of SMALL CAPITALS.

**AEDICULE** (or **AEDICULA**) (pl. AEDICULAE). In architecture, a frame around a window, door, or niche decorated in a classicizing manner, with COLUMNS, ENTABLATURE, and PEDIMENT, as seen in the windows of the Palazzo Farnese (fig. 18.57).

**ALTARPIECE.** A painted or sculpted religious image that stands upon and at the back of an altar; for a typical example, see Orcagna's altarpiece (fig. 5.3). An altarpiece may depict the CRUCIFIXION, the Virgin and Child, and/or various saints, including the saint to whom the particular church or altar is dedicated. In certain periods they include decorated gables and PINNACLES, as well as a PREDELLA. See also *MAESTÀ*.

**AMBULATORY.** A passageway surrounding the high altar of a church, usually vaulted; see Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito (fig. 6.19). Ambulatories are also used for the covered colonnaded or arcaded walkways around open courtyards—for example, in a cloister; see the plan of Santa Croce (fig. 2.37).

**ANNUNCIATION.** The announcement by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26–38). In many representations of this scene a dove appears, to indicate that the Virgin has conceived by the Holy Spirit and will bear the Son of God: see the examples by Ghiberti, Fra Angelico, and Lorenzo Lotto (figs. 7.5, 9.1, 19.1). The Annunciation to the Shepherds is the scene in which angels announce to shepherds the birth of Christ (Luke 2:8–14); see the example by Taddeo Gaddi (fig. 3.30).

**APOCALYPSE.** The Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, in which St. John narrates the visions he experienced on the island of Patmos. A major source of iconography for Last Judgment scenes, as in figures 2.9, 3.1, 4.36, 20.1.

**APOCRYPHA.** A group of writings once included in versions of the Bible, but now generally excluded. The scene of the two midwives bathing Christ in Nicola Pisano's *Annunciation, Nativity,* and *Annunciation to the Shepherds* (fig. 2.20) is drawn from apocryphal sources, as is Filippino Lippi's scene of *St. Philip Exorcising the Demon in the Temple of Mars* in the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella in Florence (fig. 13.34).

**APSE.** A large semicircular or polygonal niche, as seen in Leonardo's drawing of churches (fig. 16.8), at Santa Maria della Consolazione in Todi (fig. 17.16), and behind the Virgin in Domenico Veneziano's St. Lucy altarpiece (fig. 11.8).

**ARCADE.** A series of ARCHES with their supporting COLUMNS or PIERS, as in the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino (fig. 14.29).

**ARCH.** A means of construction in which an opening, usually semicircular, is spanned by a series of wedge-shaped elements. It is supported from below by walls, PIERS, or COLUMNS, and by BUTTRESSING at the sides; see the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino (fig. 14.29).

**ARCHITRAVE.** The LINTEL and the lowest part of an ENTABLATURE; see Bramante's Tempietto (fig. 17.9).

*ARRICCIO.* The relatively coarse plaster that forms the first layer applied to a wall in the making of a FRESCO; see figure 1.15.

*ARTE* (pl. *ARTI*). See GUILDS.

**ARTS, LIBERAL.** The seven Liberal Arts, derived from the curriculum for secular learning during the Middle Ages, are grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. They were frequently represented allegorically during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; see Pollaiuolo's tomb of Pope Sixtus IV (fig. 13.10).

**ARTS, MECHANICAL.** Practical occupations that involved working with the hands. During the Middle Ages, the Mechanical Arts included painting, sculpture, and architecture. Contrasted to the ARTS, LIBERAL.

*A SECCO.* See FRESCO.

**ASCENSION.** The ascent of Christ into heaven, as witnessed by his disciples forty days after the RESURRECTION (Luke 24:51 and Acts of the Apostles 1:9–12). This subject formed part of the narrative cycles at Giotto's Arena Chapel (fig. 3.4), Andrea da Firenze's Chapter House frescoes at Santa Maria Novella (fig. 5.8), and Ghiberti's first set of Baptistery doors (fig. 7.4).

**ASSUMPTION.** The ascent of the Virgin Mary to heaven after her death and burial when, according to Roman Catholic belief, her soul was reunited with her body; see the examples by Correggio (fig. 18.44) and Titian (fig. 19.10).

**ATTIC STORY.** An extra story that appears above the ENTABLATURE; see the exterior view of Michelangelo's design for St. Peter's in Rome (fig. 20.10).

**AUGUSTINIAN ORDERS.** There were a number of religious congregations that followed the rule of St. Augustine; the two main branches include the Augustinian Canons and the Augustinian Hermits. The followers of Augustine usually wore black robes, as seen in Simone Martini's altarpiece of *The Blessed Agostino Novello* (fig. 4.18).

*AVELLO* (pl. *AVELLI*). Italian word for tomb, generally used by art historians to refer to a tomb surmounted by a Gothic arch. *Avelli* were often built into an opening between two chapels or as a series in a wall, as across the façade of Santa Maria Novella (fig. 10.6).

*BALDACCHINO.* A canopy, usually placed over an altar or over the reserved sacrament; see figure 6.18.

*BALUSTER.* A cylindrical or more elaborately shaped decorative element or support, often used in a series on a balcony or staircase railing; see Castagno's *Niccolò da Tolentino* tomb (fig. 11.18) or Bramante's Tempietto (fig. 17.9).

**BARREL VAULT.** A semicylindrical VAULT; see the barrel vaults surmounting the NAVE and side chapels of Alberti's Sant' Andrea in Mantua (fig. 10.9).

**BASE.** The lowest element of a COLUMN, wall, or DOME, occasionally of a statue; see the base of the column in Piero della Francesca's *Annunciation* (fig. 11.27) or the elaborately worked base of Cellini's statue of Perseus (fig. 20.22).

**BASILICA.** A general term applied to any church that, like Early Christian basilicas, has a longitudinal NAVE that terminates in an APSE and is flanked by SIDE AISLES; see figures 6.14, 6.17–6.19.

**BAY.** An individual unit of space defined by COLUMNS or PIERS and VAULTS in a vaulted structural system; the term also refers to the vertical definitions of these same units on the exterior or interior surfaces of a building, as indicated by such elements as BUTTRESSES and COLUMNS. The individual bays are evident in the plan of Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito (fig. 6.19).

*BEATO* (fem. *BEATA*). Italian word for "blessed." Specifically, beatification is a papal decree that declares a deceased person to be in the enjoyment of heavenly bliss (*beatus*) and grants a form of veneration to him or her. It is usually a step toward canonization. The painter who in English is called Fra Angelico was in Italian called Beato Angelico, even though he was not beatified until the twentieth century.

**BENEDICTINE ORDER.** Founded by St. Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–c. 543) at Subiaco near Rome, the Benedictine rule spread to England and much of Western Europe in the next two centuries. Less austere than other early ORDERS, the Benedictines divided their hours between religious worship, reading, and work, generally either educational or agricultural.

*BIRETTA.* The square cap worn by ecclesiastics, that of priests being black, bishops purple, and cardinals red; see Raphael's *Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Luigi de' Rossi* (fig. 17.56).

BLIND ARCADE. A closed ARCADE, as above the entrance door of Codussi's San Zaccaria (fig. 15.57).

BOLE. The red pigment used as a glue to adhere gold leaf to the plaster surface in panel painting. If the gold on a painting was thin or has been rubbed, the bole may be visible, as it is near the top of Duccio's *Entry into Jerusalem* (fig. 4.10).

BOTTEGA. Italian for "shop," used to describe both the group of assistants who worked with an artist and the place where they worked.

BRACCIO (pl. *BRACCIA*). Italian for "arm." A unit of linear measurement used in many Italian centers, but varying from place to place; in Florence a *braccio* was approximately 1.913 modern feet (58.3 cm).

BROKEN CORNICE. Term used to describe the sections of a CORNICE or ENTABLATURE that are not continuous. For an example in which the cornice juts forward and backward in space, see the façade of Il Gesù in Rome (fig. 20.55).

BURIN. The pointed tool used to create ENGRAVINGS. The V-shaped point of the burin is forced along the surface of the copperplate, thus expelling the copper to create a sharply defined groove. For engravings, see the examples by Pollaiuolo (fig. 13.5) and Mantegna (fig. 15.28).

BURR. The rough areas of copper left along a scratch made in a copperplate by a DRYPOINT NEEDLE. When the plate is inked and printed, these areas create blurred lines. Artists sometimes used this technique to create a less linear effect; see the engraving by Mantegna (fig. 15.28).

BUTTRESS. A masonry support that counteracts the outward thrust of an ARCH or VAULT; diagonal buttresses are visible in the exterior view of Florence Cathedral (fig. 6.7).

CALVARY. See GOLGOTHA.

CAMALDOLITE ORDER. An independent branch of the BENEDICTINE ORDER founded by St. Romuald to establish the Eastern eremitic (solitary) form of monasticism in the West. St. Romuald was born in Ravenna about 950 and died in 1027. The painter known as Lorenzo Monaco (see pp. 144–148) was a member of the Camaldolites, and Brunelleschi's church of Santa Maria degli Angeli (fig. 6.20) was intended for this order.

CAMPANILE. From the Italian word *campana* ("bell"). A bell tower either attached to a church or free-standing nearby; see figs. 1.8, 18.1.

CAMPO. Italian for "field," used in Siena, Venice, and other cities to denote certain public squares. For the irregularly shaped Campo in Siena, see figure 1.9; see also PIAZZA.

CANTORIA. The Italian word for a balcony used by musicians, as in the examples by Luca della Robbia and Donatello once in Florence Cathedral (figs. 10.16, 10.19).

CAPITAL. The decorated, crowning member of a COLUMN or PILASTER, on which rests the LINTEL or the arches of an ARCADE; see the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino (fig. 14.29); see also ORDER (architectural).

CAPOMAESTRO. Italian word for headmaster, used for the person in charge of design and construction of a cathedral or major governmental structure. The artist Giotto served as *capomaestro* of Florence Cathedral from 1334 until his death in 1337.

CARMELITE ORDER. Begun in the mid-twelfth century by a crusader named Berthold and his followers, who settled in caves on Mount Carmel and led lives of silence, seclusion, and abstinence. About 1240 they migrated to Western Europe, where the rule was altered, the austerities mitigated, and the ORDER changed to a mendicant (begging) one, analogous to the DOMINICAN and FRANCISCAN ORDERS. Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence (see fig. 8.16) is a church of the Carmelite Order.

CARTELLINO. See TITULUS.

CARTOON. Full-scale preparatory drawing on one or more sheets of heavy paper; see Raphael's cartoons for the *School of Athens* (*Philosophy*) and for the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel (figs. 17.48, 17.57, 17.59).

CARYATID. A female figure that structurally or decoratively takes on the function of a COLUMN or PILASTER.

CASSONE (pl. *CASSONI*). Italian term for large painted or carved chests for clothing, as seen in the background of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (fig. 19.19). Pairs of *cassoni* were given to newlyweds (fig. 13.17). Pesellino's painting of the *Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death* (fig. 12.28) was originally part of a *cassone*.

CATHEDRAL. The church in which the bishop of a diocese has his permanent *cathedra*, or episcopal throne. Not all large churches are cathedrals, and a city, no matter its size, can have only one cathedral. See the cathedrals of Florence (figs. 2.38–2.39) and Siena (figs. 2.26–2.27).

CENACOLO. Italian word for supper room or REFECTORY, as in the Cenacolo of Sant'Apollonia, location for Castagno's *Last Supper* (fig. 11.1). The term is also used to refer to a representation of the Last Supper.

CENTERING. The wooden scaffolding, often quite elaborate, used to support arches and vaults, including domes, while they were being constructed. Brunelleschi built the dome of Florence Cathedral without using traditional centering (fig. 6.11). Centering is visible in Vasari's fresco showing the construction of the new St. Peter's (fig. 20.40).

CHALICE. Generally, a drinking cup, but specifically the cup used to hold the wine consecrated during the EUCHARIST; see the chalice in the foreground of Andrea del Sarto's *Lamentation* (fig. 18.19).

CHANCEL. The space in a church that contains the high altar or that is reserved for the clergy and choir. It is set off from the NAVE by steps and occasionally by a screen; see Palladio's San Giorgio Maggiore (figs. 19.66–19.67).

CHANCEL ARCH. The area of wall that frames the opening into the CHANCEL, sometimes also called a triumphal arch; see Giotto's Arena Chapel (fig. 3.3) and Santa Croce in Florence (fig. 3.19).

CHAPTER HOUSE. The meeting hall within a monastery where the residents gather to discuss matters of governance. The so-called "Spanish Chapel" at Santa Maria Novella in Florence (fig. 5.1) and the Pazzi Chapel at Santa Croce in Florence (fig. 6.1) are both examples. In Italian churches chapter houses are usually located off the east or back side of the cloister.

CHASING. The ornamentation of metal by engraving; see the bronze doors by Pisano and Ghiberti (figs. 3.33–3.34, 7.4–7.6, 10.1, 10.13–10.15).

CHERUB (pl. CHERUBIM). One of an order of angelic beings ranking second to the SERAPHIM in the celestial hierarchy, usually represented as a baby angel; see Donatello's *Cantoria* (fig. 10.19).

CHIAROSCURO. In painting, the contrast of light and shade—from the Italian *chiaro* (light) and *oscuro* (dark)—to enhance modeling, as in Masaccio's *Expulsion* (figs. 8.13–8.14).

CHIAROSCURO WOODCUT. A WOODBLOCK PRINT made by using several woodblocks, each printed with a different color; see figure 18.52.

CHRISTUS MORTUUS. Latin phrase used for a naturalistically depicted dead Christ, as in Giotto's *Crucifix* (fig. 3.2).

CHRISTUS PATIENS. Latin phrase for a suffering Christ of the Byzantine type. A cross with a representation of the dead Christ, as seen in Coppo di Marcovaldo's and Cimabue's *Crucifixes* (figs. 2.7, 2.11–2.12). This type in general superseded representations of the CHRISTUS TRIUMPHANS.

CHRISTUS TRIUMPHANS. Latin phrase for a triumphant Christ. A cross with a representation of a living Christ, eyes open and triumphant over death, as seen in figure 2.3. Scenes of the PASSION OF CHRIST are usually depicted at the sides.

CIBORIUM. Another word for *BALDACCHINO*, the canopy usually placed over an altar or over the reserved sacrament.

CINQUECENTO. Italian word for five hundred, used to refer to the 1500s—the sixteenth century.

CISTERCIAN ORDER. A reform movement in the BENEDICTINE ORDER started in France in 1098 by St. Robert of Molesme for the purpose of reasserting the original Benedictine ideals of field work and a life of severe simplicity.

CLAUSURA. Latin word for closure, used to signify the restriction of certain orders of monks and nuns to sections of their convents, and to their prohibition against speaking to lay persons. Castagno's *Last Supper* (fig. 11.1) was painted for a nunnery in which *CLAUSURA* was practiced.

CLERESTORY. The area of a church elevated above adjacent rooftops, with windows to allow light into the interior. In many churches the

clerestory is in the upper part of the NAVE, which is higher than the SIDE AISLES; for example, see Santa Maria Novella (fig. 2.34).

CLOISTER. An enclosed courtyard in a monastery surrounded by an ARCADE, providing a place for monks or nuns to walk and breathe fresh air within the monastic complex; the center is sometimes used as the monastery's burial ground. For examples see the plans of the Florentine monastic complexes at Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce (figs. 2.35, 2.37).

CLOSED DOOR. See *PORTA CLAUSA*.

CLOSED GARDEN. See HORTUS CONCLUSUS.

CLOTH-OF-HONOR. A piece of fabric, usually richly colored and decorated, that hangs behind the Madonna and Child or other religious figures in paintings. Such clothes were often used by Venetian painters; see examples by Giorgione and Titian (figs. 19.4, 19.8). The idea may have originated when such cloths were hung behind sculpted figures for feast days and special celebrations.

COFFER. In architecture, a recessed panel in a ceiling or vault, first used in ancient Greek and Roman architecture (see the Pantheon, fig. 1.2). For examples, see Sant'Andrea in Mantua (fig. 10.9), Piero della Francesca's *Madonna and Child with Saints* (fig. 11.30), and Melozzo da Forlì's *Sixtus IV, His Nephews, and Platina, His Librarian* (fig. 14.24).

COLONNADE. A continuous row of COLUMNS supporting an ENTABLATURE, as in Domenico Veneziano's *Annunciation* (fig. 11.9) and Bramante's Tempietto (fig. 17.9).

COLONNETTE. A slender, columnar decorative motif, as seen in Donatello's *Cantoria* (fig. 10.19).

COLOSSAL ORDER. See GIANT ORDER.

COLUMN. A free-standing cylindrical support, usually consisting of a BASE, a rounded SHAFT, sometimes fluted, and a CAPITAL. For examples, see Brunelleschi's San Lorenzo (fig. 6.17) and Palladio's Villa Almerico (fig. 19.62); see also ORDER (architectural).

*COMPAGNIA*. See COMPANY.

COMPANY (Italian: *compagnia*). In Renaissance terms, a fraternal organization under ecclesiastical auspices dedicated to good works. In Venice, a *compagnia* was usually called a *SCUOLA* (school), though it had no educational function; in Tuscany it was sometimes called a CONFRATERNITY.

COMPOSITE ORDER. See ORDER (architectural).

COMPOUND PIER. A supporting PIER that has COLONNETTES, half-columns, or PILASTERS attached to it, as in Santa Maria Novella in Florence (fig. 2.34). Often used in Gothic churches, the compound pier is also known as a cluster pier.

*CONDOTTIERE*. Italian term meaning mercenary military leader; see the monuments to Gattamelata (fig. 10.23), Hawkwood (fig. 11.3), Tolentino (fig. 11.18), and Colleoni (fig. 13.16).

CONFRATERNITY. See COMPANY.

CONSOLE. A bracket, usually formed of VOLUTES that project from a wall to support a LINTEL, CORNICE, or other member, as on the Palazzo Medici cornice (fig. 6.23), or in Michelangelo's Laurentian Library Entrance Hall (fig. 18.11).

*CONTADO*. Countryside or rural area around a city.

*CONTRAPPOSTO*. Italian word meaning "set against," describing the position assumed by the human body when the weight is borne on one leg while the other is relaxed. *Contrapposto* can suggest that a figure has the potential for movement; see Donatello's *St. Mark* (fig. 7.12).

COPE. A semicircular cloak or cape worn by ecclesiastics in processions and on other solemn ceremonial occasions. The angel in the foreground of Hugo van der Goes's Portinari altarpiece (fig. 13.32) wears a cope.

CORBEL. An arrangement of stones that projects from the surface of a wall to provide support; see the corbels on the Palazzo dei Priori (fig. 2.40).

CORBEL TABLE. A row of CORBELS, as on the Palazzo dei Priori (fig. 2.40).

CORINTHIAN ORDER. See ORDER (architectural).

CORNICE. The crowning, projecting architectural feature, especially the uppermost part of an ENTABLATURE; see the Palazzo Medici cornice (fig. 6.23).

*CORPUS CHRISTI*. Latin phrase for the body of Christ. At the Feast of Corpus Christi, the presence of Christ in the EUCHARIST is honored, and there is a procession of the HOST.

*CORPUS DOMINI*. Latin phrase for body of God. See also *CORPUS CHRISTI*.

CROCKETING. A decorative device, usually leaflike in shape, that surmounts the gables and PINNACLES of Gothic architecture and the frames of panel paintings; note the crockets along the top of the throne of Giotto's *Enthroned Madonna with Saints* (fig. 3.18). For an especially florid example, see figure 8.2.

CROSS-VAULT. See GROIN VAULT.

CRUCIFIX. From the Latin word *crucifixus* (an object made in the shape of a cross), a painted or sculpted representation of a cross with the figure of Christ crucified on it; see figures 2.7, 2.11–2.12, 3.2.

CRUCIFIXION. The death of Christ on the cross, described in all four of the GOSPELS (for example, Matthew 27:33–56). In Christian theology, the Crucifixion represents Christ's sacrifice for the sins of the world—an act that made it possible for humanity to gain access to paradise. Because it is the central mystery in Christianity, it is frequently represented; see examples by Masaccio, Mantegna, and Tintoretto (figs. 8.1, 15.21, 19.43).

CRUCIFORM. A word used to describe the Latin cross shape of many Christian churches; see figures 2.35, 2.39, 5.16, 6.14, 6.19, 19.67.

CUPOLA. Another word for DOME—a rounded, convex roof or vaulted ceiling, usually hemispherical, on a circular BASE and requiring BUTTRESSING; see Brunelleschi's cupola for Florence Cathedral (fig. 6.7) and Michelangelo's for St. Peter's (fig. 20.11).

CUSPING. In Gothic architecture, a motif composed of a series of scallops that decorate an arched opening, also used to decorate Gothic niches for sculpture and the frames of panel paintings; see the niche for Nanni di Banco's *Four Crowned Martyrs* (fig. 7.15) and the frame of Lorenzo Monaco's *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 5.12).

DALMATIC. An ecclesiastical vestment slit at the sides and with wide sleeves, worn in the Western church by deacons at High MASS. The full-length angels at the top of the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal are shown wearing dalmatics (fig. 12.14). A similar garment was also worn by kings at coronation.

DENTILS. A decorative molding derived from antiquity that consists of a row of small, projecting blocks, used as a motif on IONIC and CORINTHIAN CORNICES; see Donatello's *Annunciation* (fig. 10.21).

DEPOSITION. The removal of Christ's body from the cross after the CRUCIFIXION; also known as the Descent from the Cross; see the examples by Lorenzetti and Fiorentino (figs. 4.25, 18.28).

DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. See DEPOSITION.

DIAPHRAGM ARCH. An ARCH set within a wall that divides one spatial area from another. Such walls are found on the sides of the four porches of Palladio's Villa Almerico (Villa Rotonda) (fig. 19.62).

DIPTYCH. ALTARPIECE or devotional picture consisting of two wooden panels joined together.

*DISEGNO*. Italian for "design" or "drawing," used in the Renaissance to refer to the emphasis on precise figure drawing in Florentine and Roman art, especially of the High Renaissance.

*DI SOTTO IN SÙ*. Italian phrase that refers to the idea of looking up from below. A type of ILLUSIONISM in painting, achieved by means of sharp FORESHORTENING, in which the figures and architecture seem to be high above and receding from the spectator; see Mantegna's frescoes in the Camera picta (fig. 15.26) and Correggio's *Vision of St. John the Evangelist* (fig. 18.43).

*DOGE*. Italian word for the elected head of state in Venice and Genoa.

DOME. A large CUPOLA supported by a circular wall or DRUM, or, over a noncircular space, by corner structures such as PENDENTIVES; see figure 6.7.

DOMICAL VAULT. A four-sided VAULT shaped like a DOME with arched openings on all four sides. The domical vault was popularized in the Renaissance by Brunelleschi, who used it for the loggia of the Ospedale degli

Innocenti (fig. 6.13) and the side aisles at both San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito (figs. 6.17–6.18).

**DOMINICAN ORDER.** Founded as a preaching ORDER at Toulouse in 1216 by St. Dominic, the Dominicans lived austerely and believed in having no possessions, surviving by charity and begging. After the FRANCISCANS, they became the second great mendicant (begging) order. The churches of Santa Maria Novella (fig. 2.34) and San Marco in Florence are of the Dominican Order. The painter Fra Angelico (see pp. 222–231) was a Dominican monk.

**DONOR.** The person or group who commissions and pays for a work of art or architecture for public display, usually as a religious donation to a church or monastery. The donor is occasionally represented in the work, as in Giotto's Arena Chapel (fig. 3.14), Masaccio's *Trinity* (fig. 8.21), and Mantegna's *Madonna of the Victory* (fig. 15.27); see also PATRON.

**DORIC ORDER.** See ORDER (architectural).

**DRUM.** One of several sections composing the SHAFT of a COLUMN. Also, a cylindrical wall supporting a DOME; see Bramante's Tempietto (fig. 17.9) and the dome of St. Peter's (fig. 20.10).

**DRYPOINT NEEDLE.** A pointed metal tool with a slightly rough ball on the point, which, when dragged across a copperplate, produces a rough scratch with raised copper (called the BURR) to the sides. When printed, this produces a slightly blurred line. For an example, see the print by Mantegna (fig. 15.28).

**DUECENTO.** Italian word for two hundred, used to refer to the 1200s—the thirteenth century; also called Dugento.

**DUOMO.** Italian word for CATHEDRAL.

**EGG-AND-DART.** A decorative molding derived from antiquity that consists of alternating oval and pointed, arrowlike forms, as in the FRIEZE of Donatello's *Annunciation* (fig. 10.21).

**ENGRAVING.** A printmaking technique in which lines scratched into a copperplate with a BURIN are inked and printed; see examples by Pollaiuolo and Mantegna (figs. 13.5, 15.28).

**ENTABLATURE.** The upper part of an architectural ORDER; see the portico of the Villa Medici at Poggio a Caiano, where the FRIEZE of the entablature is decorated with figures (fig. 12.20).

**EUCHARIST.** From the Greek word for thanksgiving. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, celebrated in the MASS. Eucharist can refer to the consecrated bread and wine used in the rite of Communion, or to the rite itself.

**EXEDRA.** A semicylindrical architectural space or shape surmounted by a half-dome; see the exedrae on Brunelleschi's dome for Florence Cathedral (fig. 6.8).

**EX-VOTO.** Latin phrase meaning "from a vow." An ex-voto is an offering made to fulfill a vow, often in the form of a painting presented to a church in hope of or in gratitude for divine help.

**FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.** The four Latin Fathers of the Church are saints Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory, who were early teachers and defenders of Christianity. They are represented, with the four Evangelists, in the lower panels of Ghiberti's North Doors (fig. 7.4).

**FIGURA SERPENTINATA.** A figural position that twists the limbs in different directions, producing a spiral effect in space, as in Michelangelo's *St. Matthew* (fig. 16.41) and *Victory* (fig. 18.15) and Parmigianino's *Vision of St. Jerome* (fig. 18.49).

**FORESHORTENING.** The technique used in painting or RELIEF sculpture to suggest that figures, parts of the body, or other forms are shown in sharp recession, as in Mantegna's *Foreshortened Christ* (fig. 15.23).

**FRANCISCAN ORDER.** The first great mendicant (begging) ORDER, founded by St. Francis of Assisi (Giovanni di Bernardone, 1181/82–1226) for the purpose of ministering to the spiritual needs of the poor and imitating as closely as possible the life of Christ, especially in its poverty. Examples of Franciscan churches include Santa Croce in Florence (figs. 2.36–2.37) and Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (figs. 5.15–5.16) in Venice.

**FRESCO.** Italian word meaning "fresh," referring to a painting made on wet plaster with pigments suspended in water so that the plaster absorbs the colors and the painting becomes part of the wall; see figure 1.15. *FRESCO A SECCO*, or painting on dry plaster (*secco* is Italian for "dry"), was also used, but is a much less durable technique, and the paint tends to flake off with time.

**FRIEZE.** The middle part of the ENTABLATURE; also, any horizontal band decorated with moldings, RELIEF sculpture, or painting. The frieze of Donatello's *Annunciation* (fig. 10.21) is decorated with several motifs drawn from classical antiquity.

**GENIUS** (pl. GENII). In Roman and Renaissance art, usually the guardian spirit of a person, place, or thing, though it may be purely decorative. *Genii* are represented in human form frequently seminude and winged; see the *genii* on the base of the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal (fig. 12.14).

**GESSO.** A mixture of finely ground plaster and glue used to prepare the surface of a wooden panel for TEMPERA painting (fig. 1.13), or to prepare a wooden sculpture for POLYCHROMY, as in Donatello's *Penitent Magdalen* (fig. 12.6).

**GIANT** (or COLOSSAL) ORDER. PILASTERS or COLUMNS that span more than one story of a structure; see the pilasters on the exterior and interior of St. Peter's in Rome (figs. 17.15, 20.10).

**GILDING.** Coating with gold, gold leaf, or some gold-colored substance, as in Orcagna's altarpiece (fig. 5.3); for a diagram, see figure 1.13. Techniques were devised in Italy for gilding on painting, sculpture, and architectural ornament.

**GIORNATA** (pl. GIORNATE). A patch of INTONACO of sufficient size for an artist to complete one day's work on a FRESCO, thereby revealing how quickly an artist and his workshop worked. For examples that indicate the progress on a work, see Masaccio's *Tribute Money*, which took thirty-one days to complete (fig. 8.9), and Michelangelo's *Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Planets* on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling, which took seven days to finish (fig. 17.34).

**GLAZES.** In oil painting, thin layers of superimposed translucent varnish, often with a small amount of pigment added, to modify color and build up a rich, sonorous effect. Titian used glazes extensively in such later pictures as the *Rape of Europa* (fig. 19.24).

**GOLDEN LEGEND.** A collection of stories of saints' lives written in the thirteenth century by Jacopo da Voragine, archbishop of Genoa. The scene of the Virgin Mary appearing to St. Bernard, as painted by Filippino Lippi, is drawn from the Golden Legend (fig. 13.31).

**GOLGOTHA.** Aramaic word for "skull"; thus, the Place of the Skull. Golgotha is the site outside Jerusalem where Christ was crucified (Matthew 27:33). Calvary, another name for the same place, is from the Latin word for skull, *calvaria*. Note the skull visible below the cross of Christ in Giotto's *Crucifix* (fig. 3.2).

**GONFALONIERE.** Italian for "standard-bearer"—the title given to an important Florentine political official. The male DONOR in Masaccio's *Trinity* is dressed in the robes of a *gonfaloniere* (fig. 8.21).

**GOSPEL.** In Christian usage, the name given to the first four books of the New Testament, which relate the story of Christ's life and teachings. These books are traditionally ascribed to the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

**GRISAILLE.** Monochromatic painting in shades of gray that resembles stone sculpture; see Giotto's *Virtues* and *Vices* in the Arena Chapel (figs. 3.15–3.17).

**GROIN VAULT.** A VAULT created by the intersection at right angles of two BARREL VAULTS of equal height and diameter, forming a diagonal cross; see Santa Maria Novella (fig. 2.34). Also known as a cross-vault.

**GROTTESCHI.** A decorative scheme in paint or stucco using motifs discovered during the Renaissance in an ancient Roman setting that was presumed to be a grotto, hence the name. These motifs were interwoven into a variety of patterns to cover walls or PILASTERS; see Pintoricchio's Piccolomini Library frescoes (fig. 14.1) and Raphael's Villa Madama (fig. 17.61).

**GUILDS.** *Arti* (sing. *Arte*) in Italian. Independent associations of bankers and artisan-manufacturers. There were seven major guilds in Florence (see p. 24). Other guilds included the Arte dei Corazzai e Spadai—armorers and sword-makers; the Arte dei Linaioli e Rigattieri—linen drapers and peddlers; and the Arte di Pietra e Legname—workers in stone and wood, including stone sculptors. See also *MERCANZIA*.

**GUILLOCHE.** An ancient decorative motif composed of curvilinear interlaced lines; it is used for the FRIEZE in Castagno's *Last Supper* (fig. 11.1).

**HARPY** (pl. HARPIES). From the Greek word meaning "snatcher," a female monster who carries souls to hell, combining a woman's head and body with a bird's wings, legs, claws, and tail; see the harpies on the base of the Madonna's pedestal in Andrea del Sarto's *Madonna of the Harpies* (fig. 18.18). Harpies occasionally appear as more benign spirits who carry souls to another world.

**HELLENISTIC.** The historic period from the time of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE until the first century BCE. The *Belvedere Torso* (fig. 17.4) is an example of art from this period.

**HERM.** The torso of a male figure emerging from a pedestal, sometimes used as a PILASTER; see the four examples in the Altar of Mars in Filippino Lippi's *St. Philip Exorcising the Demon in the Temple of Mars* (fig. 13.34).

**HORTUS CONCLUSUS.** Latin phrase for "CLOSED GARDEN," referring to the phrase "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (Song of Solomon 4:12). Often used as a symbol of Mary's virginity in scenes of the ANNUNCIATION; see the example by Fra Angelico (fig. 9.1).

**HOST.** From the Latin *hostia* ("sacrificial victim"). In some Christian denominations the term Host is used to designate the bread or wafer consecrated in the EUCHARIST or MASS and regarded as the body of Christ. The priest is holding up the Host in Raphael's *Mass of Bolsena* (fig. 17.52).

**HUMANIST, HUMANISM.** This title originally applied to a teacher of humanistic studies—rhetoric, grammar, poetry, history, and moral philosophy—based on the study of ancient texts on these topics in Latin and Greek. These texts confirmed a new intellectual and scientific interest in understanding the world, while their praise for the deeds of great figures from antiquity supported the notions of pride and fame that were becoming important. During this period humanism was, with some effort, integrated with Christianity, seeking to supplement faith by insisting on the dignity of the individual and the human potential for achievement.

**ICON.** From the Greek term for "image" or "likeness," but commonly used in Orthodox Christian denominations to designate a panel painting representing Christ, the Virgin Mary, a saint, or a religious narrative.

**ICONOGRAPHY.** The identification and study of the subject matter of a work of art, including the identification of symbols.

**ILLUSIONISM.** Technique of representing the objects and architecture in a work of art, usually a painting, so they seem to be weighty and tangible and existing within actual space; see Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (fig. 14.16) and Melozzo da Forlì's *Sixtus IV, his Nephews, and Platina, his Librarian* (fig. 14.24).

**IMPASTO** (pl: *IMPASTI*). Raised brushstrokes of thick paint, as in Titian's *Rape of Europa* (fig. 19.24).

**IMPOST BLOCK.** A square block placed above the CAPITAL in an architectural ORDER; for examples, see Brunelleschi's church of San Lorenzo, in which the impost blocks are decorated (fig. 6.17), and his church of Santo Spirito, in which they are left plain (fig. 6.18).

**IN SITU.** In the original location.

**INTARSIA.** Inlaid cabinetwork composed of various woods; see Federico da Montefeltro's *STUDIOLO* (figs. 14.31–14.32) and the North SACRISTY of Florence Cathedral (fig. 12.16).

**INTONACO.** The layer of smooth plaster on which a FRESCO is painted; see figure 1.15.

**IONIC ORDER.** See ORDER (architectural).

**ISTORIA.** Italian term for history or historical narrative. See also *STORIA*.

**LAMENTATION.** The mourning of Christ's mother and his followers over the body of Christ after the DEPOSITION. Not mentioned in biblical accounts of the CRUCIFIXION; see the example by Andrea del Sarto (fig. 18.19).

**LANTERN.** The official architectural term for a windowed turret at the top of a DOME; see the lanterns at the top of the domes in figures 6.9, 17.16.

**LAST JUDGMENT.** The second coming of Christ, when he judges souls to determine whether individuals will be sent to heaven or to hell. Representations of this subject are usually accompanied by a multitude of saints and angels, and scenes from heaven and hell. See the examples by Giotto and Michelangelo (figs. 3.1, 20.1).

**LINTEL.** The horizontal beam spanning an opening, as on the façade of Peruzzi's Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne (fig. 18.60).

**LITANY.** A form of group prayer consisting of a series of supplications by the clergy with responses from the congregation.

**LITURGY.** The ceremonies of public worship, including the required prayers and other readings.

**LOGGIA** (pl. LOGGIE). A gallery or ARCADE open to the air on at least one side; see Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti (fig. 6.13).

**LOST PROFILE.** The representation of a face turned away from the viewer so that less than half the face is visible, used by Renaissance painters to increase the illusion of depth; see the angels in Masaccio's early *Madonna and Child with Saints* (fig. 8.5) or Judas in Leonardo's *Last Supper* (fig. 16.23).

**MACHICOLATIONS.** Openings in a projecting wall or parapet through which pitch or molten lead might be cast upon the enemy beneath; see the machicolations across the top of the Palazzo dei Priori in Florence (fig. 2.40).

**MAESTÀ.** Italian term meaning "Virgin in Majesty," used to refer to a large ALTARPIECE of the Virgin enthroned, adored by saints and angels; see Duccio's *Maestà* for Siena Cathedral (fig. 4.5).

**MANDORLA.** From the Italian word for "almond," an oval or almond-shaped halo that surrounds a figure to indicate divinity or holiness; see the Florentine Baptistery mosaics (fig. 2.9), Giotto's *Last Judgment* from Pisa (fig. 3.1), Orcagna's Strozzi altarpiece (fig. 5.3), and Nanni di Banco's *Assumption of the Virgin* (fig. 7.16). In Torriti's *Coronation of the Virgin*, the Virgin and Christ share a mandorla (fig. 2.14), but in the Master of the Triumph of Death's *Last Judgment* (fig. 4.37) they have individual mandorlas.

**MANIERA.** From the Italian for "manner," a term sometimes used by art historians to define a sophisticated, artificial, and refined style that flourished in the Italian courts during much of the sixteenth century. The term has been used to describe such a diverse group of works created in so many centers by such different artists that it has become confusing and is no longer used in this book. The relationship of this term to the broader and also misleading term MANNERISM has been variously interpreted.

**MANNERISM.** See *MANIERA*.

**MASS.** The celebration of the EUCHARIST to perpetuate the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, including readings from one of the GOSPELS and an epistle; also the form of LITURGY used in this celebration.

**MAZZOCCHIO.** A wire or wicker frame around which a hood or *cappuccio* was wrapped to form a headdress commonly worn by fifteenth-century Florentine men; see Uccello's *Deluge* (fig. 11.4).

**MERCANZIA, MERCATANZIA.** The merchants' GUILD.

**MINORITES.** A name once used for the Franciscan Friars Minor, the largest of the three branches of the FRANCISCAN ORDER.

**MITRE.** A hat terminating in tall peaks at the front and back—the distinctive headdress of the pope, bishops, and abbots. Mitres are worn by St. Zenobius in Domenico Veneziano's St. Lucy altarpiece (fig. 11.8), the deceased in the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal (fig. 12.14), and St. Louis of Toulouse in Giovanni Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece (fig. 15.41).

MONSTRANCE. An open or transparent receptacle of gold or silver in which the consecrated HOST is exposed for adoration; one is shown on the altar in Raphael's *Disputà* (fig. 17.49).

MOZZETTA. A cape with a hood worn by the pope and other dignitaries of the Church; see Titian's *Pope Paul III* (fig. 19.21).

MULLION. A vertical COLONNETTE or support dividing a window into two or more openings; see the Palazzo Medici (fig. 6.23).

NAVE. The large central hall, usually axial and often with a CLERESTORY, that characterizes the BASILICA and Latin cross plans; see Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito (fig. 6.18).

NEO-PLATONISM. A school of Greek philosophy established in Alexandria in the third century CE that was revived by Italian humanists in the fifteenth century. These scholars translated the works of Plato and Plotinus and tried to evolve a system that would reconcile Christian beliefs with Neo-Platonic mystical thought. How much impact this movement had on art is still debated. See also PLATONIC ACADEMY.

NYMPHAEUM. Literally "a place for nymphs." A term used to describe a garden with pools, fountains, and statuary that create a secluded woodland effect. A semicircular nymphaeum is found behind Palladio's Villa Barbaro at Maser (figs. 19.64–19.65).

OCULUS (pl. OCULI). A circular opening in a wall, as in the CLERESTORY and DRUM of Florence Cathedral (fig. 6.7), or at the apex of a DOME, as at the Pantheon (fig. 1.2) and Santa Maria delle Carceri in Prato (fig. 12.21).

OGEE ARCH. A pointed arch with curving sides, as on the façade of the Ca d'Oro (fig. 15.8).

OIL PAINT. Pigments mixed with the slow-drying and flexible medium of oil. Oil paint can be applied to a panel covered with GESSO, as in TEMPERA painting, or to a stretched canvas strengthened with a mixture of glue and white pigment.

OPERA DEL DUOMO. Board of Works of a CATHEDRAL, often functioning as the PATRON for works of art created for the cathedral. A cathedral museum is sometimes known as the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.

ORATORY OF DIVINE LOVE. A CONFRATERNITY, founded in Rome and aimed at the reform of the Church from within. It was pledged to the cultivation of the spiritual life of its members by prayer and frequent Communion and to the performance of charitable works. It had received the grudging approval of Pope Leo X by 1517, but was dissolved in 1524. Its members expanded their original work into the newly founded THEATINE ORDER.

ORDER (architectural). A series of Greek and Roman architectural motifs that give aesthetic definition and decoration to the post-and-lintel system. An order is characterized by a COLUMN (usually including BASE, SHAFT, and CAPITAL) and its ENTABLATURE (including ARCHITRAVE, FRIEZE, and CORNICE). The five classical orders are the DORIC (fig. 17.9), IONIC (figs. 19.2, 20.51), CORINTHIAN (figs. 17.15, 19.68), TUSCAN (fig. 18.59), and COMPOSITE (fig. 9.7). PILASTERS, or half-columns that span two stories of a structure, are referred to as examples of the GIANT or COLOSSAL ORDER.

ORDER (monastic). A religious society or fraternity living under a particular rule. See BENEDICTINE, CAMALDOLITE, CARMELITE, CISTERCIAN, DOMINICAN, FRANCISCAN, and THEATINE.

ORTHOGONALS. Lines running at right angles to the picture surface but, in a representation using one-point perspective, converging toward a common vanishing point in the distance; the orthogonals are clearly visible in the piazza of Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (fig. 14.16). For a diagram see figure 6.5.

PALAZZO (pl. PALAZZI). Italian for "palace," but during the Renaissance and later the word was also used for large civic or even religious buildings, as well as for relatively modest town houses.

PALMETTES, PALMETTO DECORATION. An ancient decorative motif composed of long, thick palm fronds fanned out to form circular patterns, as in Donatello's *Cantoria* (fig. 10.19).

PARCHMENT. Processed animal skin used for manuscript pages and other documents (see figs. 5.21, 15.52).

PASSION OF CHRIST. The sufferings of Christ during the last week of his earthly life, or the representation of his sufferings in narrative or pictorial form, as at Giotto's Arena Chapel (fig. 3.4), or in the fresco cycle in the Collegiate Church at San Gimignano (figs. 4.20–4.22).

PASTIGLIA. Raised plaster decoration, as seen in the letters that seem to be coming from Gabriel's mouth in Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi's *Annunciation with Two Saints* (fig. 4.17), or on the frame of figure 15.42.

PATEN. The shallow dish, usually circular, on which the HOST is laid during the EUCHARIST or MASS; see the paten resting atop the CHALICE in Andrea del Sarto's *Lamentation* (fig. 18.19).

PATRON. The person or group who commissions and pays for a work of art or architecture. The patron is sometimes represented in the work, as in Giotto's Arena Chapel (fig. 3.14), Masaccio's *Trinity* (fig. 8.21), and Mantegna's *Madonna of the Victory* (fig. 15.27). See also DONOR.

PEDIMENT. A triangular architectural motif developed in ancient Greece and popular for temple façades in ancient Rome. Usually supported by columns, half-columns, or pilasters, as on the façade of the Pantheon (fig. 1.2) and Palladio's San Giorgio Maggiore (fig. 19.68). Arched or rounded pediments became popular in the Renaissance. See Michelangelo's Laurentian Library, which features both the traditional triangular and the rounded pediment (fig. 18.11).

PENDENTIVE. In a domed structure, the four curved triangular segments that provide a transition from a square or rectangular space to the DRUM or circular base of a DOME; see Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel (fig. 6.1) and Bramante's Santa Maria presso San Satiro (fig. 17.5).

PERISTYLE. A COLONNADE or ARCADE around a building or open court; see the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino (fig. 14.29).

PIANO NOBILE. Italian phrase meaning "noble floor" or "floor for the nobles." It refers to the second story of a building (American style; in Europe this is called the first story), intended for the owner and family; see Bramante's Palazzo Caprini (fig. 17.19).

PIAZZA. Italian word for public square; see the huge piazza in Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (fig. 14.16). See also CAMPO.

PIER. A vertical architectural support used in an arched or vaulted structural system. Piers are usually rectangular in section but, if used with an ORDER, they may be decorated with half-COLUMNS or PILASTERS with BASES and CAPITALS of the same design. For an example see the interior of Florence Cathedral (fig. 2.38).

PIETÀ. Italian word meaning both "pity" and "piety." It designates a representation of the dead Christ, generally but not always mourned by the Virgin, and with or without saints and/or angels; see Michelangelo's Florence *Pietà* (fig. 20.16). When the representation shows a larger group of figures it is usually termed a LAMENTATION; see the example by Andrea del Sarto (fig. 18.19).

PIETRA FORTE. The tan stone traditionally employed by Florentine builders. The Palazzo dei Priori in Florence is built of *pietra forte*; see figure 2.40.

PIETRA SERENA. The gray Tuscan limestone used in Florence. Brunelleschi used *pietra serena* in the Ospedale degli Innocenti, the Pazzi Chapel, and many other structures (see figs. 6.1, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17–6.18).

PILASTER. A shallow, vertical element having a CAPITAL and BASE. A pilaster is engaged in a wall, from which it projects, and is decorative rather than structural. See the exterior and interior of Alberti's Sant'Andrea in Mantua (figs. 10.7, 10.9) and of St. Peter's in Rome (figs. 17.15, 20.10).

PINACOTECA. Italian word for picture gallery.

PINNACLE. A pointed ornamental motif used along the crest of paintings, sculptural niches, and buildings. It is mainly decorative and is especially common in the Gothic period; see the façade of Siena Cathedral (fig. 2.27), Giotto's design for the Campanile in Florence (fig. 3.24), and the niche for Nanni di Banco's *Four Crowned Martyrs* (fig. 7.15).

PINXIT. Latin word for "he/she painted," often used in artists' signatures.

**PLATONIC ACADEMY.** An informal group of fifteenth-century Florentine humanists and scholars, founded by Marsilio Ficino, who translated Plato and Plotinus into Latin. The academy's history is uncertain, but it was apparently encouraged by Cosimo de' Medici. See also NEO-PLATONISM.

**PLINTH.** A square block supporting a column, pedestal, or statue; note the plinths below the column bases in Brunelleschi's San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito, where they function as part of his proportional system (figs. 6.17–6.18).

**POLYCHROMY.** The addition of many colors, especially to sculptures, to achieve a naturalistic or colorful effect; see Donatello's *Penitent Magdalen* (fig. 12.6) or Mazzoni's *Adoration of the Child* (fig. 15.68).

**POLYPTYCH.** An ALTARPIECE or devotional object consisting of more than three sections joined together; see Lorenzetti's Pieve altarpiece (fig. 4.23) and Orcagna's Strozzi altarpiece (fig. 5.3).

**PORPHYRY.** A rare, hard, purplish-red stone; the wall behind the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal is porphyry (fig. 12.14). Sometimes Renaissance sculptors and architects used red marble or even red sandstone as a substitute.

**PORTA CLAUSA.** Latin phrase for "closed door," referring to Ezekiel's vision of the door of the sanctuary in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, which was closed because only the Lord could enter it (Ezekiel 44:1–4). The *porta clausa* is used as a symbol of Mary's virginity, often in scenes of the ANNUNCIATION; see the example by Piero della Francesca (fig. 11.27).

**POUNCING.** A method of transferring a drawing to a surface preparatory to painting. Small holes pricked along the outlines of the CARTOON are dusted with powdered charcoal so that the lines of the composition are transferred to the surface beneath. The drawing used in this method is called a *SPOLVERO*. Piero della Francesca often used pounced drawings to transfer his carefully designed heads to the INTONACO surface in his FRESCO cycle at San Francesco in Arezzo; see figs. 11.23–11.24.

**PREDELLA.** Pedestal of an ALTARPIECE, usually decorated with small narrative scenes; see Orcagna's Strozzi altarpiece (fig. 5.3), Monaco's *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 5.12), and Fabriano's *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 8.2).

**PRIE-DIEU.** French phrase literally meaning "pray God." A small prayer desk with a footpiece on which to kneel and a support to hold a book. A *prie-dieu* is visible behind the Virgin Mary in Lotto's *Annunciation* (fig. 19.1).

**PRINT.** The artwork made when a wooden block or copperplate or some other material is prepared with a design, inked, and pressed onto a sheet or paper or some other material. See figures 13.28 (a WOODBLOCK PRINT), 13.5 (an ENGRAVING), 15.28 (an ENGRAVING with BURR from a DRYPOINT NEEDLE), and 18.52 (a CHIAROSCURO WOODCUT).

**PRIORI.** Italian for "priors"—the council or principal governing body of a town.

**PUNCH WORK.** The addition of patterned effects by using stamps that indent the surface of a panel painting; see figures 4.14, 4.17.

**PUTTO** (pl. *PUTTI*). A figure of a male baby, often winged. Sometimes these figures personify love and are called cupids or *amoretti*; sometimes they are intended to represent angels and are called *angeletti*. Often they are purely decorative. The term *putto* is of modern application; documents sometimes refer to these figures as *spiritelli*. They are especially common in the art of Donatello; see his *Annunciation* (fig. 10.21) and also the *putti* on the Marsuppini tomb (figs. 12.10–12.11).

**QUATREFOIL.** The elegant French Gothic shape used, for example, for the first two sets of bronze doors created for the Florentine Baptistery by Pisano and Ghiberti; see figs. 3.33–3.34, 7.4–7.6. Also used for paintings; see the predella panels of the altarpiece by Monaco (figs. 5.12–5.13).

**QUATTROCENTO.** Italian word for four hundred, used to refer to the 1400s—the fifteenth century.

**QUOIN.** Larger, heavier blocks of stone used along the corners to define and frame an architectural structure; see figures 16.12, 18.57.

**REFECTORY.** The dining hall of a monastery, often decorated with a painting of the Last Supper; see Leonardo's *Last Supper* (fig. 16.23); see also *CENACOLO*.

**RELIEF.** Sculpture in which the figures or forms are united with a background and project from it. It is called high relief (fig. 2.30) or low relief (figs. 10.25–10.26) depending on the amount of projection. Ghiberti and Donatello evolved a kind of relief that combined high and low relief, called pictorial relief (see figs. 7.18, 10.14). See also *RILIEVO SCHIACCIATO*.

**RESURRECTION.** The rising again of Christ on the third day after his death and burial, a scene mentioned in the GOSPELS but not directly described; see the examples by Piero della Francesca and Michelangelo (figs. 11.20, 18.8).

**RIBBED VAULT.** A GROIN VAULT with the groins accentuated by projecting stone ribs; see Santa Maria Novella (fig. 2.34).

**RILIEVO SCHIACCIATO.** Italian term for "flattened relief," referring to a kind of sculpture initiated by Donatello in which distance and perspective are achieved by optical suggestion rather than sculptural projection; see his *St. George and the Dragon* (fig. 7.14) and Michelangelo's *Madonna of the Stairs* (fig. 16.33).

**RINCEAU** (pl. *RINCEAUX*). An ancient decorative motif composed of the leafy tendrils of a vine, usually arranged to form a pattern of repeated spirals; see the altar in Ghiberti's competition panel (fig. 7.3).

**ROSARY.** A string of beads ending in a crucifix. The form in present use was developed by the DOMINICAN ORDER as an aid to memory in the recitation of prayers. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were many forms of rosary; see figure 15.64.

**RUSTICATION.** Protruding masonry, frequently with a roughened surface; see the Palazzo dei Priori (fig. 2.40), the Palazzo Pitti (fig. 10.12), the Palazzo del Tè (fig. 18.61), and Ammanati's courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti (fig. 20.26).

**SACRA CONVERSAZIONE.** Italian term for "sacred conversation," a Madonna and Child accompanied by four or more saints either conversing or silently communing in a unified, continuous space; see Mantegna's San Zeno altarpiece (fig. 15.19) and Giovanni Bellini's San Zaccaria altarpiece (fig. 15.1).

**SACRISTY.** The room in a church near the high altar where the clothing and objects needed for the MASS are stored and where the persons involved in the ceremony dress; see the North Sacristy of Florence Cathedral, with its elaborate *INTARSIA* decoration (fig. 12.16).

**SALA.** Italian for "room" or "hall."

**SCUOLA** (pl. *SCUOLE*). See COMPANY.

**SERAPH** (pl. *SERAPHIM*). A celestial being or angel of the highest order, usually represented with three sets of wings and sometimes shown as a head with wings; see the seraphim that compose the MANDORLA of Christ in Orcagna's Strozzi altarpiece (fig. 5.3) and of Sassetta's *St. Francis in Ecstasy* (fig. 14.2). See also CHERUB.

**SFUMATO.** Italian term for "smoky," used for the method developed by Leonardo da Vinci of modeling figures by virtually imperceptible gradations from light to dark; see the *Madonna of the Rocks* (fig. 16.18).

**SGRAFFITO** (pl. *SGRAFFITI*). A technique of scratched and tinted designs in plaster used for Florentine house façades, seen in the FRIEZE of the Palazzo Medici courtyard (fig. 6.26). Also any drawings or writings scratched on a wall.

**SHAFT.** A cylindrical form; in architecture, the part of a COLUMN or PIER between the BASE and CAPITAL; see the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino (fig. 14.29).

**SIBYLS.** Greek and Roman prophetesses who were thought to have foretold the coming of Christ; see Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling (figs. 17.30, 17.36). The sibyls are known by their location; thus the Delphic Sibyl is from Delphi, the Cumaean Sibyl from Cumae, and the Tibertine Sibyl, from Rome, is named for the Tiber River.

**SIDE AISLE.** One of the corridors parallel to the NAVE of a church, separated from it by an ARCADE or COLONNADE; see the side aisles flanking the nave in Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito (fig. 6.18).

*SIGNORIA*. Italian word for lordship, used to refer to the governing bodies of Florence.

SILVERPOINT. A drawing made with a slender silver rod or wire on paper coated with a colored, slightly grainy preparation; see Leonardo's *Study of the Head of the Angel* (fig. 16.19).

*SINOPIA* (pl. *SINOPIE*). Preliminary brush drawing in red earth mixed with water, usually done on the ARRICCIO layer when making a FRESCO; see figures 1.15–1.16. This Italian term derives from the city of Sinope in Asia Minor, which was famous for its red earth.

SOFFIT. The underside of an ARCH, as seen in the background in figure 14.24, or of a CORNICE, VAULT, or balcony.

*SPALLIERA* (pl. *SPALLIERE*). Italian term for one of the large horizontal paintings placed in a Florentine Renaissance home high on the wall above the paneled wainscoting. Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* (fig. 13.22) may originally have functioned in this manner.

SPANDREL. The roughly triangular area between two adjoining ARCHES; see the sequence of spandrels in the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino (fig. 14.29) and the spandrels on either side of the arch in Foppa's *Crucifixion* (fig. 15.60).

*SPOLVERO*. Italian term for "dust off," used to describe a preparatory drawing for a FRESCO. In the method known as POUNCING, small holes are pricked along the outlines of the drawing and dusted with powdered charcoal so that the lines of the composition are transferred to the surface beneath. Piero della Francesca often used the *spolvero* technique to transfer his carefully designed heads to the fresco surface in his cycle at San Francesco in Arezzo; see figures 11.23–11.24.

*SPRUE*. The channels through which molten bronze passes to reach a mold when casting a bronze sculpture; see figure 1.19. The sprues also fill with bronze, which needs to be cut away once the work is cast and the mold removed.

STIGMATA. Marks corresponding to the wounds of the crucified Christ that appear on the hands, feet, and side of religious persons after prolonged meditation. They are believed to be a token of divine favor. St. Francis, the example most frequently represented, is said to have received the stigmata in 1224; see Giotto's and Giovanni Bellini's representations of this scene (figs. 3.23, 15.43).

*STORIA*. Italian for "story" or "history," used by Alberti to refer to a representation of a historical narrative or episode. See also *ISTORIA*.

STRIATION. The web of gold lines that decorate the drapery in Byzantine icons and in the Italian religious images that they inspired. For an example see the robes of the Virgin Mary in Cimabue's *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Angels and Prophets* (fig. 2.10).

STRINGCOURSE. In architecture, a horizontal band decorating and uniting the surface of a building, as seen in figure 18.57.

*STUDIOLO*. Italian for "small study," used to describe the small, specially decorated chambers in Renaissance PALAZZI where books, works of art, and objects of historical and scientific interest were kept; see the *Studiolo* of Federico da Montefeltro in the Palazzo Ducale, Urbino (fig. 14.31).

STYLOBATE. The platform on which COLUMNS rest. The top step of Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti (fig. 6.13) is the stylobate.

TABERNACLE. An elegant classicizing frame, usually at least somewhat three-dimensional. For tabernacle windows see figures 18.4, 20.26; for tabernacle niches see figure 18.11. Also used to describe a shrine intended to contain the consecrated bread and wine.

TEMPERA. Ground colors mixed with egg yolk; see figure 1.13 for a diagram of a typical tempera painting. Tempera was widely used for Italian panel painting before the sixteenth century.

TEMPLE. Non-Christian religious structure.

TERRA-COTTA. Italian word for "baked earth," a hard glazed or unglazed earthenware used for sculpture and pottery or as a building material. The word can also mean something made of this material or the color of it—a dull brownish-red. Terra-cotta *PUTTI* decorate the top of Donatello's *Annunciation* (fig. 10.21).

*TERRA VERDE*. Italian for "green earth," the color used for the under-paint of flesh tones in TEMPERA painting and sometimes as the main color for FRESCOES, as in Uccello's Chiostro Verde frescoes (fig. 11.4).

THEATINE ORDER. Founded jointly in 1524 by St. Cajetan and Giovanni Carafa (later Pope Paul IV), and also called the Society of Clerks Regular, it presented a new model of deportment marked by extreme austerity, a devotion to pastoral work, and a strong emphasis on prayer and EUCHARISTIC devotion.

TIARA (papal). The pope's pointed crown, which is surmounted by an orb and cross. In the early Renaissance it was quite simple, as is shown in Maso di Banco's fresco of St. Sylvester (fig. 3.27), but later examples have three crowned tiers, as in the bottom left of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (fig. 17.53). An emblem of the pope's sovereign power, the tiara has little sacred character and is not worn during celebrations of the MASS, at which time the pope wears a MITRE.

TIE-ROD. An iron rod used structurally to keep the base of an ARCH or VAULT from spreading. Tie-rods are visible at the Arena Chapel (fig. 3.3), Florence Cathedral (fig. 2.38), and Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (fig. 5.15); there is even one in Giovanni Bellini's San Zaccaria altarpiece (fig. 15.1).

*TITULUS*. Latin term for "inscription," also the name given to the label that Pilate ordered to be placed on the cross of Christ (John 19:19–20). In paintings and sculptures this label often bears the initials INRI, the abbreviation for Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum—Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. For examples see paintings by Coppo di Marcovaldo (fig. 2.7), Perugino (fig. 14.19), and Mantegna (fig. 15.21). Also known as a *CARTELLINO*.

TOGA. Worn by emperors and citizens of ancient Rome, this outer layer of clothing was wrapped around the body. Renaissance artists depicted figures wearing togas when inspired by antiquity or when representing figures who lived in ancient times; see Nanni di Banco's *Four Crowned Martyrs* (fig. 7.15).

*TONDO*. Italian term for circular painting or RELIEF; see Veneziano's *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 11.7) and Michelangelo's *Doni Madonna* (fig. 16.39).

TRANSEPT. In a cross-shaped Christian church, the cross-arms placed perpendicular to the NAVE. The transepts usually separate the NAVE from the CHANCEL or APSE; see the plans in figures 6.19, 10.8.

TRANSVERSALS. In a scientific perspective composition, the horizontal lines that run parallel to the picture plane and intersect the ORTHOGONALS. The transversals are clearly visible in the piazza in Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (fig. 14.16). For diagrams see figures 6.5–6.6.

TRAVERTINE. A light-colored porous limestone used in Italy, especially Rome, for building. The exteriors of St. Peter's and of the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline are largely of travertine; see figures 20.10, 20.14.

TRECENTO. Italian word for three hundred, used to refer to the 1300s—the fourteenth century.

TRIGLYPH. In the DORIC ORDER, the element in the FRIEZE that seems to be composed of three vertical rectangles, as seen in figure 18.61.

TRIPTYCH. An ALTARPIECE or devotional object consisting of three sections; see Nardo's *Madonna and Child with Saints* (fig. 5.7) and also figures 4.26, 8.5.

*TROMPE L'OEIL*. From the French for "fool/trick the eye,"—an illusionistic painting or, much less frequently, sculpture, that emphasizes naturalistic effects to convince the viewer that the object or scene represented is real and not painted or sculpted, as in Mantegna's Camera picta (fig. 15.26), a page from a book (fig. 15.52), or Veronese's frescoes in the Villa Barbaro at Maser (fig. 19.49).

TUSCAN ORDER. See ORDER (architectural).

ULTRAMARINE. An intense blue pigment made from pulverized lapis lazuli, a semiprecious stone found in the Near East. Documents of commission often specified that painters use ultramarine for such important areas as the Virgin Mary's mantle.

**VAULT.** A structural system based on the ARCH and including the BARREL VAULT, GROIN VAULT, RIBBED VAULT, and DOME.

**VICES.** Coming from the same tradition as the VIRTUES, and frequently paired with them, the vices are more variable but usually include Pride, Avarice, Wrath, Gluttony, and Lust. Others such as Folly, Inconstancy, and Injustice are selected to make a total of seven. Seven virtues and seven vices are paired in the bottom register of Giotto's Arena Chapel (figs. 3.4–3.5, 3.15–3.17).

**VIRTUES.** Divided into the three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the four Cardinal Virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. As with the VICES, the allegorical representation of the virtues as human figures in the Renaissance derives from a long medieval tradition in manuscripts and sculpture and from such literary sources as the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius and writings of St. Augustine, with their commentaries. Seven virtues and seven vices are paired in the bottom register of Giotto's Arena Chapel (figs. 3.4, 3.15–3.17).

**VOLGARE.** Italian word for vulgar or "of the people," used to denote the developing Italian language as distinct from Latin.

**VOLUTE.** Ornament resembling a rolled scroll. Especially prominent on CAPITALS of the IONIC and COMPOSITE ORDERS; see figures 6.15, 9.7, 19.62, 20.51.

**VULGATE.** The Latin version of the Bible that St. Jerome prepared at the end of the fourth century CE.

**WASH.** A broad thin layer of diluted pigment or ink used to create shadows in some drawings, as in Leonardo da Vinci's preparatory drawing of the *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 16.17). Also refers to a drawing made in this technique.

**WOODBLOCK PRINT.** A PRINT made when a wooden block prepared with a design is inked and pressed onto a sheet or paper or some other material. When a woodblock print is made using several blocks inked in different colors, it is known as a CHIAROSCURO WOODCUT.

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The categories below are intended to be helpful, but because of limited space books are listed only once even though they may be related to two or more categories. Additional bibliographies in greater depth can be found in virtually all the sources listed here. Electronic sources for periodical articles, which often offer important new ideas about the period and its artists, include *Art Abstracts or Art Full Text* (for articles from 1984 to the present), *Art Index Retrospective* (articles from 1929 to 1983), the *Avery Index to Architecture Periodicals* (some articles in full text, with some coverage back to 1860), and the *Bibliography of the History of Art* (articles from 1973 to the present). *The Grove Dictionary of Art* is an excellent source for bibliography and is also available in a regularly updated online edition in many libraries through a suite of databases offered by Oxford Art Online.

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*History of Italian Renaissance Art*, Seventh Edition, brings you an updated understanding of this pivotal period as it incorporates new research and current art historical thinking, while also maintaining the integrity of the story that Frederick Hartt first told so enthusiastically many years ago. Choosing to retain Frederick Hartt's traditional framework, David Wilkins' incisive revisions keep the book fresh and up-to-date.

Newly added works of art reflect our ever-expanding understanding of the diversity of the Renaissance period. These additions include more drawings and prints, as well as examples of porcelain, stained glass, and blown glass. The visual culture of the time also encompassed inexpensive, mass-produced devotional works, and a print known as the *Madonna del Fuoco* has been added as a rare surviving example of this type of work. Several more portraits and a new representation of the David and Goliath theme expand the exploration of iconographic themes. More color illustrations can be found throughout, with a special emphasis on showing architecture and architectural models in color. An updated bibliography provides a guide for further reading about artists and major topics.

David Wilkins brings a strong, contemporary sensibility to Italian Renaissance art, revising the text for greater clarity, but always with an eye to preserving the evocative and compelling voice of the book's original author.

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